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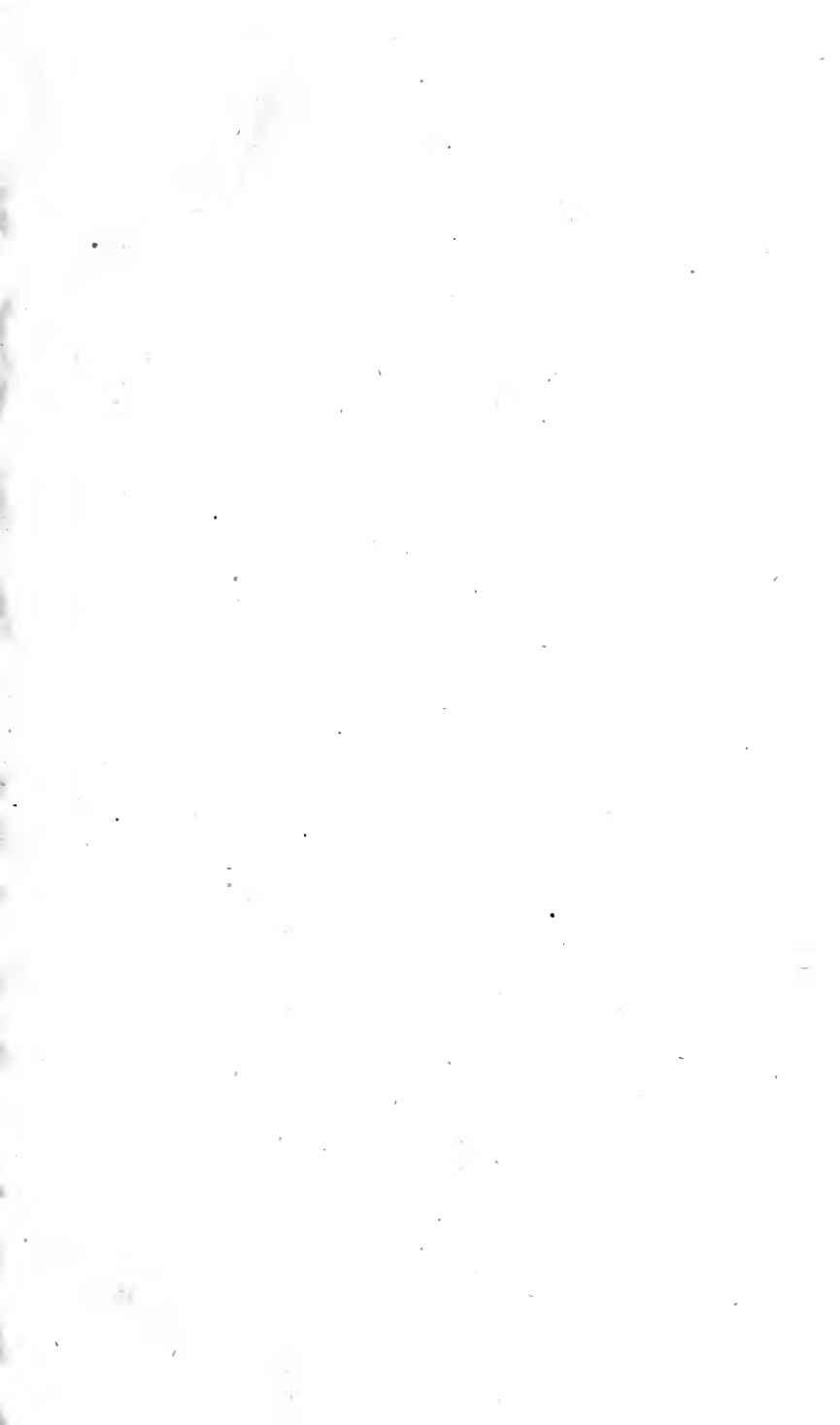
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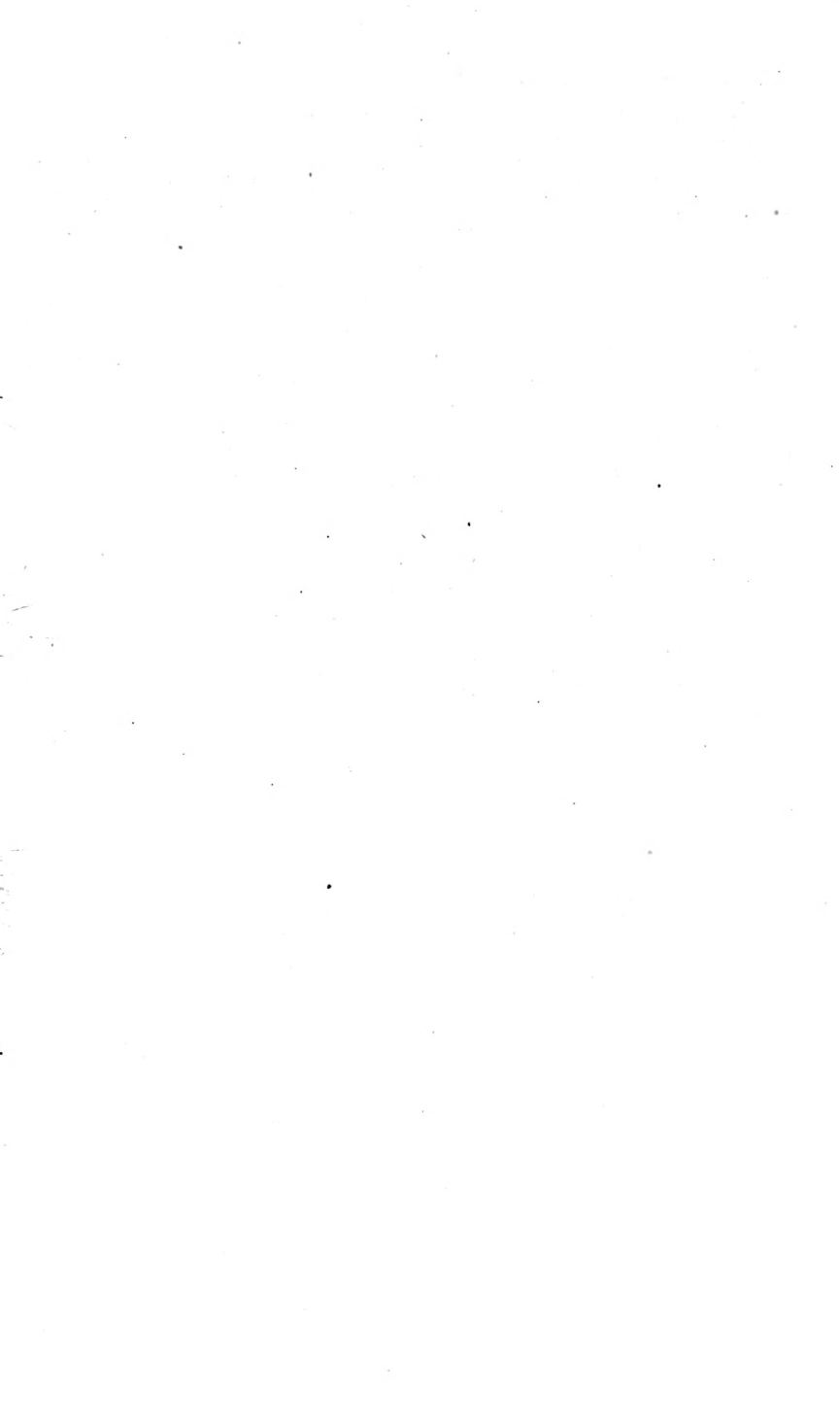
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THE FAITH

AS UNFOLDED BY MANY PROPHETS:

A N E S S A Y.

BY

HARRIET MARTINEAU.

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THE FAITH

AS UNFOLDED BY MANY PROPHETS.

I.—*There is no God but God.*

THERE was a friendship like that of brothers between Havilah the son of Aram, and a man of another nation, to whom Havilah gave the name of Eber. Yet Eber was a Christian, while Havilah was a follower of the Prophet. Havilah remembered how his father had early taught him to despise the Jews and Christians, and how he had hated them in his youth; yet he did not repent of his love for Eber.

Eber was not like many persons, whether Musselmen, Jews, or Christians, who having known no men but those of their own country and their own religion, despise or fear all other men. He had left his own country many years before, and had travelled from the sun-setting to the sun-rising; and as his heart was open to every man, there were some found to love him in every land: and among these was Havilah. When Havilah's child was sick, Eber had, by the blessing of God, restored him. When Havilah's wife had died, Eber wept with the mourner and comforted him. Havilah, in his turn, opened his house and his bosom to the Christian, and made him as his brother.

It happened, one day, that as the sun drew near its setting, Havilah and Eber went out beneath the shade of spreading trees, where the evening breeze might come to them to refresh them after the heats of the day. While the Christian watched

how the sun hastened down the sky, his friend withdrew a little space to repeat his accustomed prayers. When Havilah had returned, and they were both seated beneath a tree, Eber said to him :

Though we worship not side by side, nor in the name of the same Prophet, yet we worship together ; for we pray to the same God, often at the same time,—and may it not be said in the same spirit ?

So I even believe, my friend. Yet has the Prophet declared that there is much evil in friendship with unbelievers. Listen to what is said in the Book : “ O true believers, have no intimate friendship with any besides yourselves : they will not fail to corrupt you.” “ Behold, ye love them, and they do not love you : ye believe in the Scriptures, and when they meet you, they say, ‘ We believe ; ’ but when they assemble privately together, they are full of wrath against you*.” If I had loved a Christian of whom these things were to be believed, I had disobeyed the Prophet ; but Mohammed himself would have loved one whose heart is open as the heart of Eber.

Is it not elsewhere told in the Book, Havilah, who are the infidels whose friendship is dangerous ? Is it not those “ who make a laughing-stock and a jest of your religion† ; ” who “ when ye call to prayer, make a laughing-stock and a jest of it, because they are people who do not understand ? ” I have never thus jested, nor sought to turn Havilah from his faith.

Never, said Havilah. Yet is Eber among those who do not understand : else, as surely as the thirsty fields drink in the rain, would the heart of Eber receive gladly the wisdom of the Prophet.

So say the Christians of those who are called the Faithful, replied Eber. Why should we not both be of those who understand ? The same God, the One, who spread out the firmament and the sea and the fruitful fields, who bade the lion roar in the desert, and the elephant hide himself in the forests, and the flocks gather round the dwellings of men,

* Koran, chap. 3.

† Ibid. chap. 5.

hath given to each of us, not only the heart to love, but the mind to understand. Let us therefore try to understand, and to learn wisdom each of the other.

Yet, replied Havilah, did not Jesus the son of Mary, command not to give that which is holy unto the dogs? How then may the Christians impart of their faith to those who will not receive it; to those who despise it, and who are therefore cast out as dogs?

If there be hope that they will cease to despise, the Christian looks on them, not as dogs but as brethren. This is the sign by which he knows them for brethren,—that they worship the same Father.

Havilah answered, I worship, saying, “God is One God; the eternal God, and there is not any one like unto him! He is the Lord of the heavens; the Lord of the earth; the Lord of all creatures, the mighty, the wise God*.”

Thus also I worship.

When, continued Havilah, I read in the Book that “there are infidels who say, ‘Verily God is Christ, the son of Mary,’” I go on to say in the words of the Book, “And who could gainsay God if he pleased to destroy Christ, the son of Mary, and his mother, and all those who are in the earth? For unto God belongeth the kingdom of heaven and earth, and whatsoever is contained between them: he createth what he pleaseth, and God is almighty†.”

So have I ever believed of God, said Eber; and if there be some who believe that Jesus is God, I am not of them. I also say in the words of the Book, “Say not, there are three Gods; forbear this‡.” Also “Christ doth not proudly disdain to be a servant unto God:” forasmuch as he said, “O children of Israel, serve God, my Lord and your Lord.”

Havilah replied, Wise is the saying, “Neither is there any other god with him, otherwise every god had surely taken

* Koran, chap. 112 & 45.

† Ibid chap. 5.

‡ Ibid. chap. 4 & 5.

away that he had created; and some of them had created themselves above the others*.”

If, replied Eber, there had been no voice from God to teach us this, our eyes would have taught us the truth. It is many ages since the sun began to move as he has moved today, and the moon to divide the months as at this time. Our fathers watched their flocks in the plains, and saw how the stars moved silently from one part of the heaven unto the other, even as we shall behold them when this evening light has passed away. The fields also have been fruitful or bare; the flocks have borne their young, or sought shelter from storms as the seasons came round, from the days of Noah until now. It must be that the hand of one Preserver hath guided the motions of the earth and of the sky; and that the smile of one Father hath blessed mankind from one generation to another.

Havilah praised the great name, and said, Our ears also have heard that He is One.

Yes, continued his friend, it is the same voice which spoke with Adam in the garden, and called Noah from among men, and Abraham into a far country; the same which gave commandments by the Prophets, and promises by the Apostles, and the words of life by Christ.

And by Mohammed his greatest prophet, added Havilah: but his friend answered not.

If there be but one God, said Havilah after a while, there can be but one truth, and this the Prophet taught. Thus he said, There is but one true faith †,—that faith is given to men as it pleaseth God: sometimes in the law of the Jews, and sometimes in the Scriptures of the Christians; and above all, in the words of the Book. It was this truth which was given to Adam when the angels worshiped him, and to Abraham when he received the promise, and to Moses when he gave the law, and to Solomon when he sanctified the temple, and

* Koran, chap. 23.

† Preliminary Dissertation to Sale's Koran, p. 63, 4to.

to Jesus when he taught the people, and to Mohammed when he received the Book. This truth cannot be changed, however the worship of men may change.—Thus taught the Prophet.

And thus do I believe, replied his friend. The worship of Adam was not as that of Moses, neither was the prayer of Solomon like that of Mary the mother of Jesus; yet was there one truth in the bosom of them all.—What is this great truth?

Havilah bowed his head while he replied, God is One. This is the truth which the angels spake to man when he was placed on the new earth, and your Scriptures say it is that which the devils believe and tremble. It is told also in the sepulchre when the dead give account of their faith to the dread ones who inquire; and is it not declared each night at the hour of prayer?

Yet, said Eber, this great truth has been often corrupted. There have ever been men who believed it not, and there have been times when but a few chosen ones have worshiped the true God.

Even so; but such chosen ones have there ever been, that the truth might not be lost; and when they too began to fail, then was the time for admonition to be sent. In such time came Moses; in such time came Jesus; in such time came Mohammed.—Thus the Prophet taught.

I would rather say, answered Eber, that when men became able to receive more of this eternal truth, the prophets of God, Moses and Christ, were sent. Moses taught that God is One, but Christ taught more: how to look unto Him with a greater hope; to love him with a deeper love than even David, the man after God's own heart, ever felt or would have dared to cherish.

If so, replied Havilah, how shall we think of the faith of Christians when the Prophet came? Did they not worship Jesus, and Mary the mother of Jesus?

They did, and their error is to be mourned: but all Christians err not thus. Mohammed came not to admonish me, and

such as myself of the truth ; for we believe not on him : yet we know that God is One ; and much besides we know which Christ alone hath told. His Gospel tells us, as we have but now said, that forms of worship may change, while the truth changes not ; and that as many as hold this truth are brethren. Havilah ! I have travelled through many lands, and seen the worship of many nations. Where I have seen men bow down before idols of wood or stone, I have mourned, because they knew not the great truth. When I have seen those who are called Christians praying to Jesus as a God, I have also mourned, because having known the truth, they have corrupted it : but wherever I have heard prayer to the One God, whether under the palm-trees at eventide, or in the assemblies of the people at noon ; whether from the lips of men, or in the voice of a child ; whether from my own kindred, or one who speaks in a different tongue,—I have thanked God that his truth is preserved among men. Whatever else be the errors of their faith, or the varieties of their worship, I can call them brethren, while we intreat the same Father for help and blessing. Their differences will pass away with the other perishing things which are not sanctioned by God ; and what is true will remain a possession unto all for ever.

So taught the Prophet, replied Havilah.—See where some one drinks at yonder spring !

I have watched the thirsty traveller, replied Eber ; he can scarce have drunk since noon, he takes his draught so eagerly.

The water is clear, and the spring never fails, replied his friend : I have seen multitudes quench their thirst there in my day. Others go to the stream beneath the rock ; and others again to the well within the city walls. I am told that travellers in the desert collect the rain that falls, and that some who are lost in the thickets moisten their lips with the night dew. Some of this water comes from the sky, and some from the earth ; yet it is still water : it is welcome to all, and it quenches the thirst of all. The time may come when we shall

see the abyss whence it flows in so many forms, and know that there is but one source, and that it is dispensed by one hand over all the earth.—Thus is it with the truth of God.

Even so; and thus it shall at length be with the love which cannot but spring out of this truth. Then men shall not reproach one another as infidels, or refuse to worship side by side.

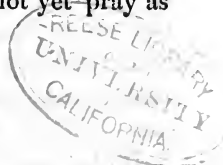
This time, however, was not yet come. Havilah went apart once more to worship, and Eber prayed beneath the tree. Though they reasoned together, they could not yet pray as brethren.

II.—*The Greatest Prophet.*

As Havilah and his friend Eber rode through the valley at noon-day, they beheld how the persons of one household purified themselves at a stream which was near their dwelling; and how, when they had purified themselves, they knelt down to pray. Havilah also fastened his horse to a tree, and prayed as he was wont at noon-day. When he had finished and had once more set forth, he saw that the countenance of his friend was grave.—He inquired wherefore; saying,

It makes my heart joyful to be abroad at the hour of prayer, and to behold wherever I turn my eyes, how many true believers remember and obey the words of the Prophet. Even here, where the hills shut us in from the more crowded and busy parts of the land, how many are worshiping in the true faith! I have marked, not only yonder household on the banks of the stream, but higher up, a wayfarer who came to purify himself; and beneath the tree young children knelt down beside their parent; and in the porch of yonder dwelling I could perceive that they who command and they who serve, bent the head together. Praised be the name of the Prophet who established prayer in all our land!

Was it Mohammed who taught men to pray? inquired Eber.



Was there not one before him who prayed continually, and who taught others to pray in spirit and in truth?

Jesus prayed as holy prophets pray, answered Havilah; but his followers corrupted the worship which he offered pure. Did they not pray to himself and to his mother Mary? Nor was this to be wondered at: Jesus appointed no times for prayer, but left every man to follow his own will. It was left for the greatest Prophet so to ordain the seasons of prayer, that no man could forget or dared neglect to offer praise continually to the One God. Doth it not gladden the heart, to know that prayer riseth up through many lands at the same hour; and that noisy cities and busy villages and quiet valleys are made as one great temple, while the names of the One God and of Mohammed his prophet are spoken there?

If I believed that Mohammed was the true Prophet, and that through all the land God was worshiped with the spirit, my heart would be glad: but believing Christ to be the last and greatest of the prophets, I would have men pray as he taught.

The Christians forget, replied Havilah, that Christ himself foretold that Mohammed should come.

We do not forget, answered Eber; but we disbelieve. In our Scriptures we find no such prophecy, and we call not that writing a part of the Gospel in which the prophecy is found. To me it appears that Christ revealed so much of the will of God, and opened so fully to men all things that are needful for their holiness and their peace, that no one was wanted after him to tell more. Or if there had been more to impart to men, I cannot think that Mohammed hath done it.

Hath not Mohammed told many things which Christ declared not? Hath he not told many things of the grave, of paradise, and the place of punishment, and also of the angels?

These things agree in nothing with what God made known by Christ, and therefore I believe them not. I hold them to be dreams.

Let us rather speak of Christ, said Havilah, lest we fall out as unbelievers are wont with the faithful.—I acknowledge the

Prophet of the Christians, and will join in doing him honour ; because it is told in the Book how Jesus said, “ I will heal him that hath been blind from his birth, and the leper : and I will raise the dead by the permission of God. Verily, herein will be a sign unto you if ye believe.—And I come to confirm the law which was revealed before me, and to allow unto you as lawful, part of that which hath been forbidden you : and I come to you with a sign from your Lord *.”

Eber replied, These signs did Jesus, and to do them was he sent.

Havilah said, I would hear from thee all that Christ did upon earth, and wherein he is thought by the Christians to be greater than Mohammed. Let us therefore turn aside into the shade, and speak of these things while we rest at ease.

The travellers cast themselves down at the mouth of a cave ; and while they talked, their beasts fed before them, under the trees.

Havilah said, We call Jesus the Apostle of God : the Christians call him the Son of God. But the Book saith, “ God is God. Far be it from him that he should have a son †.”

Eber replied, We call Jesus the son of God, because God himself so called him ; but that name was only given him because he was the chiefest apostle of God. Jesus was a man, and the servant of God. He was, like other men, wearied in body, and sorrowful in spirit. He loved as the heart of man is made to love : and we know that his friends Lazarus and Mary and Martha, and his follower John, and Mary his mother, were dear to him, and that he mourned when they were sorrowful, and was careful to do them good. The soul of Jesus was the soul of a man. As for his body, we know that he suffered as mortal men suffer. He hungered in the desert, and was in agony on the cross, and died with those who were crucified with him.

There are many, said Havilah, who say that it was one in the likeness of Jesus, and not Jesus himself, who was crucified ;

* Koran, chap. 3.

† Ibid. chap. 4.

and the Book saith, "They did not really kill him, but God took him up unto himself *." Nevertheless, as there is still an uncertain opinion concerning this, I wonder not that the Christians believe according to their Scriptures. Whether Jesus died, or was taken up to paradise without dying, he was still a man, and the apostle of God.

Eber replied, Of his death we will speak more hereafter. The work of his life was to confirm the law (as thou hast said), by showing that it was given unto the Jews from Heaven, to preserve in the earth the knowledge of the eternal truth, that God is One. As he saith, "I am not come to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfill." This work he did : and having fulfilled the law and the prophets, there was no office left for another, and therefore we call Jesus the last and the greatest of the prophets.

How say the Christians that Christ fulfilled the law?

By teaching in a more perfect way the same things which the law had taught. The law which the One God gave by Moses taught that he governs in the hearts of men, that he requires men to obey him, and that he rewards or punishes men according to their obedience. All these things Jesus taught more perfectly. He showed that men should worship with the spirit rather than by sacrifices ; that they should have pure hearts as well as clean hands ; and that they should love fervently, as well as do justly. He persuaded men to this, not by promising them greatness in this world, or threatening disgrace and slavery ; but by showing that when the greatness of the world hath passed away, God shall make men happy or miserable according to their obedience. Thus he fulfilled the law ; and thus is it truly said, "The law came by Moses, but grace and truth by Jesus Christ."

And how fulfilled he the prophets?

By showing that the things were true which they had spoken concerning himself and their own people.

If he thus fulfilled the law, how say the Christians that the

* Koran, chap. 4.

Gospel removes the law? It seems to me that the Jews ought to believe on him who confirmed their law, and that the Christians ought to say, with the Jews, that the law stands for ever.

Nay, my friend, have we not said that though there is one truth that changeth not, the forms in which it is given are made to change? Even so the law was from God, because it contained this truth; but now the same truth is given in the Gospel, and therefore the law is done away. The Jews refuse the Gospel, because it is not for them alone but for the whole world, the time being come when the great truth shall be made known to all.

If the Christians know that the great truth hath once changed its form, why should it not again? If Christ fulfilled the law, and yet declares that it shall pass away before his Gospel, may not Mohammed confirm Christ and the Gospel, and yet establish a new and better faith? So, as much as the Christians are before the Jews, will the Faithful be before the Christians.

Nay, replied Eber, but if we believe the true Gospel at all as it is given in our Scriptures, we must believe that it is to endure for ever. So hath God declared through Christ, by such signs and wonders as we cannot but believe. Those who read our Scriptures, find warnings against all prophets who shall come, against all powers which shall oppose themselves to Christianity. And it is moreover declared, through all the Gospel, that Christ shall judge the world; and that according as they hold to the Gospel, shall all who call themselves Christians rejoice or mourn at the last day. Thus are we sure that no other gospel hath come or shall come.

The Faithful, said Havilah, are astonished that the Christians should reproach the Jews with their unbelief, while they themselves reject the true Prophet. The Jews say of their law, as ye say of the Gospel, It shall stand for ever; and because they are thus convinced, they refuse Christ, as ye refuse Mohammed.

Christ was foretold by their prophets, but Mohammed was

never foretold as a servant of God. Christ wrought miracles, and was visibly sanctified from heaven; but no such signs attended Mohammed. Again: the law of the Jews was never declared to be established for ever; but rather the people were required to receive every prophet from God, whatever should be the purpose of his coming; and they knew not but that some one might come to remove the law.

I know, replied Havilah, that the Christians receive not the gospel of Barnabas, in which Mohammed is promised; but how say they that our Prophet came not with signs and wonders? It is true that Christ did more wonders before the eyes of men, raising some from the dead, and giving sight to the blind, and health to the sick, and creating food for those who hungered;—but did God favour him in the solitude of caves, as he favoured his greatest Prophet? Did he send Gabriel to him? did he take him up to heaven while men slept? And could these things happen to a false prophet?

No false prophet hath ever been thus favoured:—but was Mohammed? The followers of Jesus saw how he raised Lazarus from the dead, and cleansed the lepers, and fed the multitudes. Some saw also that one from heaven strengthened him when he prayed sorrowfully before his death; and others beheld the messengers in shining raiment who opened his sepulchre;—but who was nigh when, as Mohammed said, Gabriel came to him in the cave? and what eye beheld the Prophet ascend to heaven and return?

There is, replied Havilah, a better evidence than that of the eyes of men, be they as numberless as the stars of the firmament.

There is, replied his friend; it is the truth which speaks to the heart. This evidence I find in the Gospel of Christ, but not in the teachings of Mohammed.

I find it in both, replied Havilah. Wise is the saying, “God is but one God.”

Wise is it, and true, said Eber; but this is known to the Jews as it is to us.

Wise is the saying, that Repentance will be accepted with God; for he is easy to be reconciled and merciful. Also, that when men shall be presented before God in the judgement, none of their actions shall be hidden. Also, that no evil happeneth but by the permission of God; and that whoso believeth in God, he will direct his heart. Also, that "they who serve God and give alms hope for a merchandise which shall not perish; that God may fully pay them their wages, and make an exceeding addition of his bounty." These things the prophets taught; and do not our hearts declare that they are true?

Even so; but these very things were taught before in our Scriptures, and from Christ did Mohammed learn them.

Then Eber took from his bosom the book which he ever carried there, and read, "Repent, and your sins shall be forgiven you." "There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known." "If any man will do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." "Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth." "There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the Gospel's, but he shall receive a hundred-fold now in this time, and in the world to come eternal life."

It is true, said Havilah, that every prophet is made wise with the wisdom of prophets who have gone before; but that is a testimony that such a one is true, rather than that he is false. The hues of the clouds could never form a rainbow, if the many rays came not from one orb of light.

True, replied Eber; yet each must have a beauty of its own, while it enhances the rest. Christ testified to Moses, while he taught many things which it had not entered into the heart of Moses to conceive. Mohammed testified to Christ; but I cannot

find that he taught any new truth ; for what new things he taught, I believe not to be true.

Then, replied Havilah, the light which the Faithful declare to flow from the great source, the Christians believe to come from the unhallowed fires beneath.

Rather, replied Eber, to descend from a remote star which hath borrowed its rays from the great source. Though it hath had its use in piercing the clouds which deformed the greater light, far be it from us to worship it as the sun.

These clouds, said Havilah, what are they ?

When Mohammed arose, answered his friend, the religion of the Christians was already corrupted, so that the one eternal truth was obscured among those who should have preserved it in its full brightness and purity. Not only was Jesus worshiped as a God, but his mother also ; and the prayer which is sacred to God alone was offered to the souls of dead men, and even to the images of their bodies. Your Prophet was wise, and he discerned that such worship was foolish ; and he knew the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures so far as to perceive that such homage was also false and sinful. Therefore he set himself apart, and directed many eyes to the truth from the midst of these superstitions.

Praised be his name who did this ! exclaimed Havilah. Let all who love the truth praise him !

Nay, replied his friend, not if he also corrupted the truth. Many Christians, who believed strange heresies, dwelt in the Prophet's country, and contended among themselves concerning their faith. Many of these heresies did Mohammed receive and teach ; thus proving that his was not a true mission, and leading men further from the truth in some points than directing them towards it in others. He also received many superstitions of the Jews, which are not set down in the true Scriptures. This Christ did not. That which he confirmed was given by Moses and the prophets alone, and all the new doctrine which he taught was, in no degree, formed from the thoughts of other

men. He neither sanctioned the inventions of men, nor himself imagined anything from them. Had he done so, men would have been more ready to believe on him than they were.

Mohammed had many enemies, as well as Christ, observed Havilah.

Yes, replied his friend; the Jews, who despise every new doctrine, hated Mohammed, as some of their nation hated Christ. Other enemies had your Prophet also, because he desired greatness, and drew the sword against his foes. Men hated Jesus for a different cause; even because he forbade to use the sword, and would not be called a prince or a leader, as his nation expected their Messiah should be. Mohammed raised armies, and many feared his power:—Christ commanded peace, and was despised. Mohammed made himself a prince and a chief, and men envied him:—Christ was meek and lowly of heart, and they to whom he was promised scoffed. Mohammed told of his visions, and men believed through hope and fear, though they saw not:—Christ boasted not what was done when he prayed at midnight among the mountains; but many witnessed how he trod the waves, and how he was clothed in light, and how his Father spake to him; and yet was he rejected by multitudes, because the hopes and fears he gave were not of this world. Both died through hatred and cruelty; Christ on the cross, and Mohammed by poison. The mighty chief was honoured and mourned in his death; but unto men he died wholly, and multitudes forsook his religion when he was no more heard or seen. Christ died amid mockery and degradation; but darkness and earthquakes signaled his death; and multitudes pressed into his kingdom when he had given to others the task of preaching it. The grave hid him not; for he was seen to walk the earth, to ascend into heaven, and known to return and watch over the faithful till Judaism was overthrown. Thus the lowly and peaceful was hallowed from heaven, while the proud and warlike lived and died as other chiefs have lived and died, save that his superior wisdom gave him greater power.

Havilah was moved while his friend spoke thus; but he gave no way to anger, and kept his sorrow to himself, only saying,

How is it, then, that our faith hath spread from land to land, and included many nations, while the Christians are but a handful in comparison of the Faithful? Is not the hand of God seen in this?

The hand of God ought to be seen of us in all things, replied Eber: and in this it is not difficult to discern. I believe that your faith would not have spread as it has done, unless it had contained much that the Jews and Christians believe, and therefore much that is true. It contains also many things which are pleasant to the desires and hopes of men; much that is grateful to their thoughts and sweet to their hearts, mingled with what their souls feel to be true. Also, it is so far wiser and better than the religion of those who worship idols, that it is no wonder that they who have never heard of Christianity should gladly receive your faith.

If these be reasons why our faith has spread so far, said Havilah, they tell me not why God hath thus ordered it. If our religion be false, why hath the God of truth permitted it to be believed?

It is not for us to declare with certainty why such things are, replied Eber; but to me it appears that many nations will be prepared to receive the full truth of Christianity by believing so much of it as is contained in the religion of Mohammed. We cannot (because our faith forbids,) carry the name of Christ into new lands, joined with promises of wealth and power, or with threats of disgrace and slaughter. Ye can preach the name of your Prophet, while the sword is in one hand, and the treasures of the earth in the other; and it is better thus, than that multitudes should not hear of the one God, nor of his prophets, nor be prepared to listen to the other truths which shall surely be told when the time is ripe, and the command of God shall be sent forth.

May that time abide where it shall never again be heard of;

and that command be hidden in the bosom of God for ever ! exclaimed Havilah.—Yet think not I despise the faith of the Christians, as they despise mine, or as some of the Faithful despise it: I have learned from my friend that there is much in it which is pure, and gentle, and just, if the wisdom of our Prophet were but added to it.

If Mohammed, said Eber, had known as much of the Gospel of Christ as my friend Havilah, he would not have added to it his own imaginations.

Havilah waited in surprise for what his friend should say.

Mohammed has often used the name of Christ, and related many things of him, some true and some which we call false. He also gathered from him some of his doctrines, and some sayings concerning repentance for sins, and submission to the will of the Father: but of many things he was ignorant, because he knew not the true Scriptures in their purity; and many things were falsely told him by Christians who had corrupted the faith. For this I blame him not; but by this I know that, though a wise man, he was not an apostle of God. If he had known (as God has given it unto some men in our day to know,) how simple is the faith of Christ, so as to agree with the one eternal truth; how complete his commission, so as to leave no office for another to fill; how his doctrine purifies the heart, and his promises console and satisfy the spirit,—your Prophet would not have presumed to teach men greater wisdom, or to offer them a higher happiness than God had bestowed already.

Yet, replied Havilah, hast thou not said that the faith of Mohammed hath been spread abroad for good?

Even so, replied his friend: but that good is from Him in whose hand every man is but an instrument of his high will.—Has thy child told thee of the trouble which befell him ere we came forth?

Yes;—but wherefore this question?

I walked in the garden; and, as I passed, the child plucked up by the roots a plant which he supposed to be a weed; but

when I told him that its blossoms were beautiful in his father's eyes, he wept because of his haste, and besought me to plant it again. I did so, having first taken from its root a worm, which would soon have caused it to wither away. By the child's act was the worm discovered, yet he still wept for his rashness. Even so would Mohammed (if his desire was indeed to give truth to men, and if he could now mingle with them,) humble himself because he had despised that whose value he knew not, and attempted to injure that which he could not improve. Nor, when all things shall be revealed hereafter, will he think the less meanly of his work because God has used it for a purpose which he himself knew not of.

Let us begone, said Havilah, rising and preparing to pursue his way; I will not withdraw myself from thee on account of thy infidelity, till we have each learned all that the Prophet of each has taught. Yet doth it grieve my soul to hear Mohammed thus calmly condemned by my friend, almost as much as to hear him reviled by the Infidels who scoff. I had rather listen to the praise of Christ than to any doubts concerning him who followed and testified to Christ.

Eber was silent as they again went forth: but when they entered a place where many graves were scattered around, he said,

To bless the name of Christ, and to praise the God who sent him, is indeed to speak gladness, to worship holiness, and to find peace, whether it be in the city or in the wilderness, within hearing of the mirth of children or amidst the silence of the tombs. When the Christian mother presses her newborn child to her bosom, she remembers that through Christ she knows that there has sprung from her a being who shall live for ever. When she watches him at his play, she reposes the cares of her soul on the God who declared through Christ "that none of these little ones should perish." If she lives to behold his devotion and charity, she fears nothing which may befall him, because the safety and the treasures of the Gospel are his. If his feet slide and he fall into sin, she has

yet hope that, repenting, he may be forgiven, like the sinners to whom Jesus spake words of peace. If she behold the tomb opened for him, her voice gives praise, while her eyes overflow and her soul is calm, because she trusts to meet him again. Thus is it with all who truly know the Gospel. All good from without is increased by the peace within: all sorrows are cheerfully borne, because they issue in joy. This life is despised only in comparison with the better which is to come; it is enjoyed with gratitude, it is laid down with willingness. While the seasons change, there will be rain as well as sunshine; and, while human life endures, men must weep as well as rejoice:—but wise men know that the rose and the pomegranate spring afresh beneath the shower; and by Christ are we taught how virtue is nourished by tears. While the sun runs his course, will darkness succeed to light and sleep to the heat and burden of the day; and thus are death and the grave the portion of all men. Yet as men fear not to see the sun retire, and as they welcome sleep, do the followers of Christ await death and lie down in the grave, knowing who guards their rest, and trusting to arise as their Prophet promised, and as he himself arose. The blessings of the Gospel are wherever the thoughts of its believers are; in the house and in the field; upon the waters and among the stars; in the words of the wise; in the eyes of those who love, and in the hearts of those who mourn. Praise be to Him who has given this Gospel!

Havilah bowed his head while he answered, Praise be to Him who doeth all things well, in the heaven and upon the earth!

III.—*Of the Angels.*

It was midnight, and the voices of men were hushed in sleep. The hum of the city near which Havilah dwelt was still: the birds were hidden among the leaves, which were scarcely stirred by the night breeze; and the flocks reposed beside the dwellings. Havilah and his friend sat in the porch,

sometimes watching the silent motions of the stars, sometimes listening to the fountain which cast forth its waters in the deep shade, and sometimes gazing upon the domes of the city, which upraised themselves against the clear sky.

It is sweeter, said Eber, to watch the repose of the world than to sleep, if the mind be fully awake, and the body not overwearied. Tomorrow, in the stir of the busy morning, we may think of what we now behold, and be refreshed, as parched lips by the drops of the fountain.

Truly, said Havilah, the night has beauties as rich and mysteries as great as the day.

Here, said his friend, is no motion and no sound but the gushing of streams and the murmur of our voices. If the panther rustles in the thicket, it is where no human ear is startled at his approach: if the eyeballs of the lion glare, it is afar off in the desert, where none but the beasts of the field crouch and tremble before him. We are alone; for if other eyes look abroad upon the night from the roofs of the city, or beside the watch-fires of the plain, they behold not us as we sit within the shadow. We are alone with Him to whom the night is as the day.

Havilah replied, With Him and with his messengers, who rest not night or day. Think not, my friend, that there is no motion where all to us is still; that there is no sound where our sense catches not the echo of music. If our sight could penetrate further than that tract of light which crosses the heaven, we might behold how Gabriel* records the divine decrees, and where the Angel of the Resurrection† inquires how long it must be ere his trumpet shall sound. If our ears were quickened as they shall at length be, we might hear the rustling of wings round about us; for there is no hour when Azrael‡ hovers not near the abodes of men, or when the Genii§ come not forth from their abode in the mountains.—Yonder is also the place of tombs.

* Koran, chap. ii. † Ibid. chap. lxxix. ‡ Ibid. § Ibid. chap. lxxii.

I marked it yesterday, replied Eber; and that some who were lately dead were laid there.

Therefore, in that place of the dead, there is life, and motion, and sound. If we could enter those sepulchres, we should tremble to behold how the dread messengers of God question the departed concerning their faith and their holiness*. This is also the hour when the guardian spirits of men yield up their charge one to another, and bear on high the tablets on which human deeds and thoughts are written.—My child sleeps on his couch, and knows not that the two who have watched him through the day are taking flight, while other two draw near; but we who are awake feel in our souls that radiant eyes are upon us, and that even while we speak our words are recorded where none shall blot them out.

The God of our life sees us, replied Eber, and no created eyes can discern so piercingly; He also remembers for ever whatsoever is in the hearts of men, and no other record is so sure.

Do the Christians not believe then, said Havilah, that God has messengers, whose bodies decay not like those of men, nor are nourished, as they? Who else should bear the throne of God, and sing higher praise than men can offer? Whom besides hath man to intercede for him, to guard his soul while living, and appoint its lot after death? All who are faithful believe in such, and they are called infidels who doubt.

Far be it from me, replied Eber, to suppose that He who spread forth the universe has not filled every region with life, and formed beings as much nobler than man as man is nobler than the insect of a day. When I feel how weak are the powers of the body as compared with the strength of the soul; when my spirit mounts above the stars, or plunges into the depth of the abyss, while my feet are chained to the ground,—it is my belief that there are some who behold what I can only imagine, and grasp that which my thoughts can only reach.

* Koran, chap. x.

But such hath God created—not because he has need of them, but that they might be happy. The throne of God can be removed by none, for the heavens themselves are his-everlasting seat. Nor do men need any to intercede for them, for is it not said in your Book, as well as in the Scriptures, that “God is ready to forgive, and merciful *?” And who can so well guard the soul while living, and appoint its lot when dead, as He who dwells within the soul, and who knows “what the breast conceals”? Let men be glad if there be spirits more noble than themselves to praise and to enjoy; but, for my own part, I love to believe that by none but God himself am I guarded and cherished, and that no intercessors are needed but my own prayers.

Though it be true, replied Havilah, that God is thus with us, yet we may not dare to despise his angels whom he has set as our guard against the Evil Spirit who goes among men to tempt them†. When the appointed time of his punishment shall come, there shall be no more fear for men, and our guardians shall give up their charge; but while the Despairing One is driven back from among the stars, and has liberty to escape from hell; while we know that he besets the earth, and fulfills his vow,—how can we be safe, unless some of his own race, and substance, and power, are near to protect us?

When is this appointed time of punishment? inquired Eber;—and what is this vow?

When the dead shall arise, the Evil One shall have no more power; but till then, he does as he promised on the day when he refused to worship Adam, and made the vow, “O Lord, because thou hast seduced me, I will surely tempt men in the earth; and I will seduce them all except thy chosen servants‡.” Your Scriptures also relate how he did thus with Adam, and alas! how many have since fallen!

Nay, said Eber; our Scriptures say that it was the serpent who seduced Eve, and Eve her husband.

And who made the serpent to speak, but the Evil Spirit

* Koran, chap. xxv.

† Ibid. chap. xv.

‡ Ibid.

within him? And why was Michael sent with the sword of God to cut off the legs of the serpent, as the scripture of Barnabas relates, but that the Evil Spirit had possessed him?

The gospel of Barnabas is not the scripture in which I believe, replied Eber; and our Book relates nothing of an evil spirit being in the serpent: nor can I think but that evil as well as good comes from Him whose will is done in all the heaven and all the earth, and that to no one has he given power to afflict those in whose very souls he abides. What says the Book, which is your Gospel, when some complained that Mohammed had brought evil upon them? "If good befall them, they say, 'This is from God,' but if evil befall them, they say, 'This is from thee, O Mohammed!'—say, 'All is from God*.'"

Nay, but, said Havilah, how do we go on to read in the Book? "Whatever good befalleth thee, O man, it is from God; and whatever evil befalleth thee, it is from thyself." This evil is that which the Despairing One brings up from the depths of the heart.

Eber replied, My religion teaches me that God alone beholds the hearts of men; Mohammed also taught that "None either in heaven or earth knoweth that which is hidden, besides God†:" And again, that He alone ruleth the heart; "Know that God goeth between a man and his heart‡."

Nay, but, my friend, is it not impious to lay to the charge of God the guilt which comes forth from the heart? Can He that is holy create that which is unholy?

How then does anything that is unholy exist? Is there any Creator besides God? Yet is there sin in the world; and yet deeper guilt, I have heard thee say, is in hell;—and the Evil One himself,—how became he evil but by the permission of God?

Havilah was troubled, but he kept silence.

No man, continued Eber, can declare why anything that is unholy exists, or what shall be the issue of all that is now

* Koran, chap. iv.

† Ibid. chap. xxvii.

‡ Ibid. chap. viii.

working in the universe: God alone sees the end of all things from the beginning, and can bring calm out of the tempest, and peace from the troubles of the spirit. Do we not believe that sickness and earthquakes and famine are from God?

From Him, said Havilah, comes the desolation which wastes our cities. He sends a parching breath over our plains, and the springs are dried up, and the flocks lay themselves down to die. He frowns, and a dark shadow blots out the sun at noon-day, and he turns the moon to blood when the thunder hastes to burst upon our heads.

Even so, replied Eber; and the time has been when men said that it must be an Evil Spirit who did these things. When the dews fell, and the sky was calm, they blessed God; but supposed that he had lost his power when the floods were abroad, or the earth became barren. This was impiety: for the Only Ruler can and does make men happier through the very evils which they fear. The plains are made fertile when the floods have passed away; and holy thoughts spring up in the soul when its sorrows are over-past.

All this is true, replied Havilah; and if sorrow were the only evil, I should not fear the Despairing Angel. But what good can come out of guilt?

We know concerning this, little more than men knew of plagues and storms when they worshiped two Rulers in heaven; but thus much we do know, that there may be many purposes which man cannot discern,—that fruits may be ripening above which are planted and watered we know not where or how; and that even now we can see how some are made wise by the folly of others; how some become gentle through the fierceness which afflicts them, and pure from beholding the foulness of guilt.

Even, replied Havilah, as the son of Tagu prayed the more fervently for his father, because his father prayed not for himself; and as the wife of Tagu looked with a tenderer love upon her children, because her husband loved her not.

Even so, replied Eber. Yet unhappy are they who thus bring sorrow into their houses, and darken with the shadows of their guilt the sunshine of innocent hearts. Jesus said, "It is necessary that offences come, but alas for him through whom they come!" We know not how the offender's lot may be changed hereafter, by the woes that his guilt shall surely bring upon him; but it is better to be afflicted in body, than diseased in soul; to find all dark in the light of noon, and all silent amidst the gushing of waters and the music of the forests,—than to be blind to the signs which God holds forth in the heavens, and deaf to his voice when he calls to us from on high.

All this is true, said Havilah. Yet would I fain know why this evil exists. Whether, as my friend believes, it is God himself who administers pain of every kind; or whether, as the Prophet taught, it is the Fallen One who is permitted to seduce man;—I look earnestly for the time when we shall know why these things are so.

Meanwhile, answered his friend, I had rather believe that the cloud which now overshadows the plain came unbidden by the Creator who formed it, than that there is any sorrow which is not administered by him who dwelleth in the heart. —I had rather know that yonder star which hastens to its setting, is unmarked in its course by him, than that any thought which he controuls not can pass through the soul. As surely as he refreshes the body of thy child with sleep, he sheds the repose of this hour into thy soul; and if it be he who stirs here among the winds and waters, it is he also who in regions where the sun is now shining moves the hearts of men to resolve, their tongues to speak, and their hands to do. He needs no messengers, though he fills the universe with those who do his will. He yields up his place to none, therefore no other should be feared; and through him alone should all others be loved.

Let us now lie down to sleep, said Havilah. Safety is around us, and peace within us, whether we are guarded by angels, or by Him alone whom the angels obey.

The day-spring was near, the sky grew pale, and the early fragrance came upon the breeze.—Eber and Havilah paused once more to listen to the waters, and to see how the watch-fires became dim; and then withdrew, each to his couch.

IV.—*Of the Scriptures.*

IN the household of Havilah was an old man who was looked upon with reverence by all who dwelt under the same roof. In his youth he had been rich, and in his manhood powerful. His home had been peaceful, and the children who grew up around him were his pride. But the troubles which are the lot of all men were appointed to him in greater number and with a deeper bitterness than his friends supposed that he could have borne. His fields had been spoiled by blight and by drought; his flocks had been carried away by enemies from afar; his sons were slain in war; and his wife died in sorrow, and left him alone. His friends had compassion on him, and strove to help and comfort him;—but how could such grief as his be consoled? He withdrew himself from them, lest his mournful countenance should sadden their hearts; and, save that which was needful to preserve his life, he would receive nothing from them. After a while, however, when his friend Havilah's wife was carried to the grave, Aza, the mourner (as men called him), entered the dwelling of Havilah to weep with him, and he left that dwelling no more. Havilah would have made him as his father, while Aza himself desired to serve with those who tended the flocks or tilled the gardens. Their friendly strife was soon ended, and Aza was permitted to spend his days as it pleased him. He went to and fro in the fields and gardens as he would; and no one spoke to him, unless he desired it, save only the child of Havilah. Aza loved this child. He taught him to know the plants of the field: he sat by to smile upon his sports. He took the boy also between his knees, and told him of the children

he had lost, and of the wonders which he had beheld, and of the wisdom which he had gathered. To few besides the child did he speak ; though he loved Havilah, and bent his head before Eber as soon as he appeared. He carried the Book ever in his bosom or in his hand, and he read in it perpetually, as he sat in the porch or under the palms. One day, when Eber passed out of the dwelling, he saw Aza thus occupied ; and when he returned, the old man was still reading, as if the hours had been moments.

Thou art among those, said Eber, who find in the Book the words of peace.

Here, and here only, said the old man.

Yet, replied Eber, there are other books in which the servants and prophets of God have written concerning him. Where is thy faith in Moses, and in Jonas, and in Barnabas*, that the study of their writings is not also precious to thee ? And the Psalms of David too, do not they warm the heart and cheer the spirit ?

Aza replied, David was the beloved of God, and the prophets have also written of him : but all Scripture has been corrupted, except the Book which was given by Gabriel, and shall be preserved pure for ever :—and while I hold that which is perfect, shall I turn to that which is corrupt ?—while the Book which was written in heaven is in my hands, shall I prefer those which came through the hands of men ?

Havilah drew near, and overheard what was said. He added,

Our friend Eber believes, not only that the writings of Barnabas came through the hands of men, but that they were invented by man. I fear also that he regards not the Book as wholly sacred.

It is true, said Eber.—That there is much in the Book that is faithful, I know. That there is much that is beautiful, I perceive : but its truth is the same which other Scriptures had revealed before, and its beauty is that which a man's imagi-

* Books in use among the Mohamēdians.

nation can create. It cannot offend you to hear of other Scriptures, since you believe that God has made many revelations.

So many, replied Havilah, that if they all remained, the wisdom of angels would scarcely be greater than that of men. But that which was known to Adam, was lost to Abraham; and that which Abraham received, was not given to Moses. What God doeth is right;—but would we had these many Scriptures!

At least, said Eber, we have many left. The Law given by Moses remains, and the Books of the Prophets, and the Psalms of David; and, blessed be God! the Gospel of Christ.

And the Book of Mohammed, said Aza, bending his head over the volume as he spoke. This is the seal of the Prophets; this shall not be changed or lost, as the others have been; and therefore this is the last of the revelations of God. He will speak no more to men till the judgement.

Do the followers of the Prophet suppose that all the sacred books are changed? asked Eber.

All but the Book of Mohammed, replied Havilah. The Jews have altered the Law, and the Christians the Gospel, as the Prophet said; and none remains entire except the writing which Gabriel gave, and which no man has power to change.

How then has it been changed? asked Eber. There are some among the Faithful who read differently from others, as I have heard from thyself:—though these differences be small, I see not how they can exist at all, if God really promised that no such change should be.

Surely there are more and greater differences in the Scriptures which the Christians hold sacred? replied Havilah.

There are, answered his friend: but to us God has not promised that no word of the sacred writings should be altered. The truth which they contain shall never be changed, because it is truth; but it is given to us in a more lasting form than can be found in the number and order of words. It is

the custom of the Jews, and also of those who call themselves the Faithful, to number the sentences, and the words, and even the very letters of their Scriptures, lest any should be lost or changed. We use other methods of preserving the truth.

The Jews, said Havilah, have corrupted the Law, even more than they who worship Mary have spoiled the Gospel.

Not so, said Eber: but it is certain that unless the spirit of the Law is preserved in the heart, any care to guard the letter is of little avail. Both should be guarded: but the spirit may remain entire, even though the letter should be somewhat changed.

But, said Havilah, if a revelation be given by God, will it not be preserved by him?

Yes:—but what makes the revelation? Not the words, but the meaning which is in the words. Else no revelation could be of use to any but those whose language is the same as that of the Book given. There are many nations and many languages on the earth; and some of the revelations of God are intended for all these people: but the words of the revelations must be changed, before they can be understood by many. The Law of the Hebrews was a law for the Hebrews alone: yet I and many millions of Christians besides, though we adopt not the Law, find it necessary to learn what the Law is, in order that we may fully understand the Gospel; and not being Hebrews, we read the Law in our own tongue, and find that though the words are changed, the spirit of them may be perfectly understood. In the Gospel of Christ this is yet more clearly seen. This Gospel is not for one nation or one country. It is spreading, and shall spread, where the language of Hebrews and Greeks has never been heard of. On the coasts of distant oceans, in the midst of lands on the other side of the world, even in far islands of the sea shall the wisdom of Jesus be spoken, in tongues which are yet unknown. Even now, the same faith which was held by Paul, and John, and Peter, is cherished by those who never felt the heat of a

southern sun, and preached in the churches of European kingdoms, and blessed amidst the wilds of newly discovered lands.

It is God who has multiplied the tongues of the earth, and left one mind among them all, exclaimed Havilah.

It is, replied his friend. And to him be the praise that he has given his revelations unto this one mind, so that varieties of speech cannot injure it.

But, said Havilah, if some of the words of the sacred Books should be lost!—since it hath been so, it may be so again.

God will preserve whatever it is needful for his children to know, replied Eber; and how the Gospel has been preserved we know, and how it shall henceforth be guarded, we may perceive. If among all the errors of those who understood the Gospel wrongly, its records have been preserved to this day; if, while the believers were few among a multitude who despised or were ignorant of the Christian faith, the Books were guarded from destruction, and even injury, we may well hope that they are now safe for ever. Now, there are multitudes of Christians who keep this Gospel in their hearts, and write its words upon their memories. While many preach it in new lands, their brethren at home examine into it, that they may perfectly understand. The copies of the Books are so many that they can never be lost, and kept so pure that they cannot be corrupted. This Gospel is safe for ever.

It may not be further changed, said Havilah:—but if some say that it hath been grievously changed already, how can the Christians reply, if they have not counted the words from generation to generation, and if it hath not been promised from Heaven that no letter should be lost?

Because, replied Eber, we discern by the mind whether the spirit of the Books be true and entire: and the spirit alone is from God: the words are those of the men who wrote. This we know by the difference of the language in which the same thoughts are told. I have related to thee how Jesus and his followers ate together on the night when he was betrayed.

Peter was heard by them to declare that he would never leave Jesus ; and Jesus was heard to reply, that Peter would deny, before the morning came, that he knew him. The four men who wrote the history of Jesus heard and related this thing ; but, though the story is the same in the four Books, the words in which it is told are unlike in all. Those also who heard and saw how Peter denied Christ, have told the same truth, but again in different words ; and one adds what the others omitted,—that when the time arrived, “the Lord turned and looked upon Peter.” Now I fully believe that no word of this tale has been lost since it was first written down ; but if I were told that some few words had been changed, I should know that the truth remained, because the same story is told by four persons.

But, replied Havilah, there are some things in your Scriptures which are told by only one writer : how are they known to be faithful ?

Because the truth of some parts is confirmed by that which is known to be truth in other parts. That Nicodemus came to Jesus by night, and that Jesus talked with him of his Gospel ; also that he told the woman of Samaria who he was, and wherefore he came, are related by John alone : but no one has ever doubted the truth of these things, both because the Book of John as a whole has been carefully preserved, and because the truth of these portions agrees with the truth of other portions ; so that the change or loss of a few words would not prevent our understanding or believing the stories themselves. This is yet more true of parts of the Gospel which are more important than any of which I have spoken.

Can one part be more important than another, if all is the Word of God ?

Yes ; the smallest parts of the Gospel are more precious than any other thoughts that were ever written or spoken ; but some are more precious than others, since some are written to explain others. The things which were done were of God through Christ, while the words which explained them were

of men.—Jesus came forth alive from the sepulchre on the third day after he had been known to die. This miracle was done by God alone. The Apostle Paul wrote to show that as Christ rose, other men would rise from the dead. God knew what he wrote; God gave him to understand the thing of which he wrote; and God permitted what he wrote to be spread abroad in the world, and to be believed in by all who believed the Gospel. Therefore I receive what Paul wrote, and am thankful that his wisdom has thus come to me; but I think it less important than the fact that Jesus rose from the dead. If the epistles which Paul wrote had been lost, I might still have understood or believed that men would rise from the dead as Jesus rose: but if I had not known that Jesus rose, I could not have understood the reasonings of Paul.

It is indeed a better thing to know what the prophets did, than what their followers said, observed Havilah.

Blessed be God that we know both! replied Eber: but I surely believe that the revelation from God is rather in the things done by his hand, than in the account of those things written by his servants. That God appointed Jesus to teach men that they shall live hereafter; that by Jesus men were taught a higher love and a better obedience; that miracles were done; and that Jesus himself was raised from the dead,—these are the glad tidings from Heaven; this is the revelation which God made to men. The sacred Books contain the history of these things; they relate much that Jesus taught, and yet more that his followers believed, and preached, and wrote. All this is told even as the men themselves spoke: Matthew wrote differently from John, and John from Luke, and Luke from Paul. What they related was from God; but the words were from their own minds, and therefore can the Gospel be preached unchanged in many tongues: but the children of my own land, and those men of other countries who cannot understand all that Paul and Peter have written, can yet believe in the revelation sent by God through Christ.

My child, said Havilah, loves to hear how Jesus gave sight to the man who was born blind.

Rather, I doubt not, than to listen while Aza reads to him from the Book.—And Eber looked for the old man, but he had withdrawn to another place where he might read in peace.

Havilah replied, The Book is full of wisdom, for which the minds of children are not ripe, and therefore I would that Aza had imparted less of it to my child. I have told him that I fear lest the boy should become weary, and should turn away when the time should come for him to read :—but the old man declares there is a music in the pages, which delights every ear, and a beauty which wakens smiles even in one so young as this child. These are among the signs that it was written on high.

Nay, said Eber, but where is this music when the words are those of another tongue? The Book of the Prophet is read in my language; and if my countrymen were to believe in it, they must examine its sense, as they do the sense of the Hebrew Law, and the beauty of its language would be lost to them. It is not thus with the beauty of the Gospel, which speaks to the heart and not to the ear.

And does not the Book of Mohammed speak to the heart?

To thine, I perceive, it does; but there are many who, living in other countries and in other times, cannot understand it, except in those parts which are already found in the Law and in the Gospel. Thou canst speak my language as well as I can speak thine. Come with me to my own land, and I will take thee wherever thou shalt desire to teach thy faith. Speak of it in the churches, and men will hear but not understand. Open the Book in the dwellings of friends and read of it: they will listen, but shall not be wiser. Gather the children unto thee beneath the shade; tell them of what thy Prophet did and saw, and they will wonder; tell them what he said, and they will be weary; they will neither love him, nor inquire of his doctrine again. But suffer me to go thus abroad in thy country, and mark how the people will listen.

To the children I would tell how Jesus, the wise and the holy, loved the infants who were brought to him: I would repeat to them his parables, and declare how benignantly he lived, and how mournfully he died; and they would come continually to me, saying, "Tell us again of Jesus."—To the labourers in your fields I would speak of the day when he fed the thousands who had followed him into the wilderness; of his choosing some who were fishermen to be his witnesses; some who were poor to be his friends; and some who were despised in this world to teach men the way to a better: and your servants would cry with one voice, "If he were here, we also would follow!"—Where I see families rejoicing or mourning together, I would tell how he compassionated the woman of Nain, and restored her son to her; how he also raised the young daughter of Jairus; and how he smiled on human love, and wept for human grief, and remembered his mother and his friend in his last hour; and such families would agree to love him as one of themselves.—I would seek out the wisest and holiest of your sages as he gazed upon the heavens, or watched the stirrings of his own soul: I would pour into his ear the truth which Christ drew forth from the clouds and the winds, from the flowers of the fields and the birds of the air, from the words of men, and even from the vanity of their thoughts. Then would this wisest of your sages cry, "All the wisdom that I have gained is as nothing: henceforth I will learn at the feet of your Prophet!"—And not in your country alone should it be thus. There are lands where the sea is ever stormy, and where the sun at noonday is scarcely brighter than yonder moon at midnight here:—there are lands where no fields are tilled, and all men are hunters of the forest:—there are also lands where all the wisdom of many nations is gathered together, and where men believe not till they have searched and convinced themselves of the truth. In all these lands, among all these people, there is not one where the Gospel may not be understood; there is not one where, being understood, it will not be loved.

Yet, replied Havilah, Christ chose twelve men to be instructed in his Gospel, lest the people should not understand what he himself taught. How was this, if all may understand?

These men were chosen, replied Eber, not to receive any secret wisdom, or to learn more from Christ than the humblest who listened to him; but to behold the deeds of his life, the manner of his death, and the certainty of his resurrection. To these things they bore witness so long as they lived: but further than this they pretended not to be wiser than other men; and when they died, their office died with them. All men might, from that time, teach in perfect equality; and all that has since been needful to prepare a man to preach the Gospel, is that he should have truly received the Gospel.

My friend forgets, said Havilah, that the Apostles assisted to make the Gospel, which no man is now permitted to do; their Books are used by the Christians, and no writings of a living Christian would be so esteemed.

Eber replied, These Books contain the record of the glad tidings; but the writers did not make or assist in making the glad tidings, which were sent by God and spoken by Christ, and only written down by the Apostles and some of the Disciples. In the same manner, the Books of Moses are called the Law, though they only contain the record of the Law, which was made by God and offered through Moses. Such records could only be written by those who witnessed the revelation; and therefore no writings but those of witnesses are sacred.

Therefore it is, said Havilah, that the Christians reject the gospel of Barnabas;—but if they receive the writings of Paul, why refuse those of Barnabas?

Even if they believed this scripture to be the work of Barnabas, replied Eber, they would remember that he was not called and sanctified by miracle, by Jesus himself, as was Paul. But they also declare that it could not have been written by the companion of Paul, because he was originally a Jew, while the writer of this work calls himself a Gentile. He

also speaks of Jerusalem as being destroyed when he wrote, while Barnabas the friend of Paul could scarcely have been alive so long. Other reasons there are which it will not please my friend to hear, further than that the Christians of the early times numbered not this writing among their sacred Books.

Give me, said Havilah, the volume which is in thy bosom : I will sit down here and study it, if thou wilt go to Aza and listen to what he shall read. But remember, it was with Mohammed as with the Apostles,—that he made not the revelation, but only received it. He did not even write it down according to the thoughts of his own mind and the words of his own lips, but as Gabriel spoke : some parts also the Angel himself wrote. Let this, and the portion of truth which my friend knows to be in the Book, dispose him to receive the whole, or at least to learn why others receive it.

And let my friend, on his part, remember, replied Eber, that no eye beheld Gabriel descend to Mohammed ; while a crowd was present when the spirit sanctified the baptism of Jesus. No ear was awake when, as Mohammed declared, the name of God was named to him ; while a multitude heard when Jesus prayed “ Father, glorify thy name ! ” and a voice from heaven answered, “ I have both glorified it, and I will glorify it again. ” Let my friend remember, that by the hands of Mohammed alone were wonders pretended to be wrought, and by him alone were they recorded : while the gifts of healing, of preaching in many tongues, and even of raising from the dead, were given to all the Apostles, and to many followers besides ; and that the Scriptures which testify of these things were written by eight different persons, whose testimony was sanctioned by many more.

Havilah replied, These things I will remember willingly ; for I disbelieve not the Christian Scriptures, as the Christians refuse the Book of Mohammed. If I find that these two bear testimony to one another, I will believe in both.

Search and see, replied Eber. Only study with all thy heart, and then believe according as the truth shall appear unto thee.

While Havilah sat down to read and meditate, his friend drew near to the place where Aza still bent over the volume which lay on his knees. He made room for Eber to sit beside him, and pointed to the page where he read.

The Book was well known to Eber, who disbelieved not any religion without declaring the reasons of his disbelief. But he read yet again, because Havilah had desired that he should; and he withdrew not his eyes or his thoughts till Aza put up the volume and withdrew as the darkness came on.

V.—*Of the Prophets.*

WHEN Eber again approached his friend, he found him meditating on what he had read. Havilah pointed to the portion of the Gospel of John where Jesus is declared to have told the Jews that he was sent to fulfill the covenant made with Abraham.

The Jews were then, even as now, said he, slow of heart to believe what the prophets had spoken. Thus did Christ describe them, and thus have they ever been. See! they scoffed when the Christ spoke of Abraham as of one less favoured than himself; and were ready to stone him, when he declared that Abraham saw his day, or knew that he should come. Yet they might have known as we know, that since there is One God, there is but one truth; and that to this truth, given in many forms, all the prophets of every age were sent to testify.

I am glad, replied Eber, that while we cannot agree whether or not Mohammed was one of these prophets, we are of one mind respecting the truth of God, and the purpose for which it has been so many times revealed.

Six times, replied Havilah, has God spoken from heaven by his chief prophets*; and each time has his eternal word been the same, though it was spoken in proportion as men

* Sale's Prelim. Dissert. p. 75.

could understand; as we should tell the same truth in one manner to my child this day, and in another when he shall be of mature age.

Several times has God thus spoken, replied Eber; and each time more fully and plainly than the last; so that the Jews who cursed the Christ had no excuse for their blindness concerning him. But what were the six dispensations?

Havilah replied, When Adam was formed from the dust of the ground, and became alive, who should tell him whence he came but He who brought him forth from nothing? At first the angels only gazed on him from afar, and no living beings were beheld by him who could declare the name of the Creator. It was Jehovah himself who said to Adam, "I am thy God."—This was the first revelation.

And in this first revelation, replied Eber, was man taught that he must obey or suffer. Whatever were the obedience required, whether to refrain from a certain fruit (as our Scriptures relate), or to render the whole soul pure (as Christ taught), still the one truth has been ever repeated,—that God must be obeyed, if man would be happy.

Even so, said Havilah, was this truth shown in the second revelation. It was given to Noah. The sons of men multiplied on the earth, and their sins multiplied with them, till they forgot that God was One, and neglected his admonition. But as Noah was faithful, it was said to him from above, "Be not grieved for that which they are doing, but make an ark in our presence, according as we have revealed to thee: and speak not unto me on behalf of those who have acted unjustly, for they shall be drowned*!" And thus it was done; and while the rain poured down, the ark swam between waves like mountains, so that Noah and they who were with him were saved. Thus was God merciful, and thus did he show yet a second time that they who obey are safe.

With each revelation, said Eber, God has given a sign. With Adam the sign was in the tree of knowledge, and with

* Koran, chap. 11.

Noah in the cloud where the rainbow was fixed, to come forth with the sunshine after a storm, like the smile of God, for ever: as our Scripture saith, "The waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh; and the bow shall be in the cloud: and this is the token of the covenant which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth." —Thus were finished the two first dispensations.

The third, said Havilah, was greater than either which had been given before. It was delivered to Abraham the faithful, who was no idolater, but an example of the true religion. He was beloved of God, and, according to his hope, were his sons Ismael and Isaac great and favoured from Heaven; and according to his prayer was the mightiest of the prophets sent to confirm the true faith which was in early time given to him.

Even so, replied Eber, is he called in the Scriptures the friend of God, and the father of many nations; even so was it made known unto him that in his seed should the whole race of men be blessed; so that he rejoiced, as Christ said, "Abraham saw my day, and was glad."—The sign of this great covenant was the circumcision.

The Faithful believe, said Havilah, that in the seed of Ismael was the promise fulfilled, and therefore is the sign preserved among them.

The Christians preserve not the sign, replied Eber, because the covenant is fulfilled, and its outward forms abolished. That in Jesus the promise was fulfilled, we believe, not only because he himself said so, but because the words of the Scriptures of Moses are these: "And Abraham said unto God, O! that Ismael might live before thee! And God said, Sara thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed, and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. And as for Ismael, I have heard thee. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly: twelve princes shall he beget; and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, whom

Sara shall bear unto thee, at this set time in the next year*.” Of Isaac came Moses, and all the people to whom he said “The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from amidst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me. Unto him shall ye hearken. I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I have commanded him.” Such an one was Jesus; who was gladly foreseen by Abraham, who was of the race of Isaac, and approved by signs from heaven, as him of whom God had given the promise.—As the third covenant was made concerning him, was he not foreshown in the fourth also?

The fourth, replied Havilah, was given by Moses. By him came the Law, through which the eternal truth was made known in the world till Christ came to reveal it more fully.

Eber answered, Though Abraham was wise, and believed that God is One, some of his posterity were darkened in mind like the Egyptians among whom they dwelt; and though they believed that Jehovah was the only God of the Hebrews, they supposed that other nations had also gods.

Therefore was the revelation given unto Moses, and the Law delivered from the Mount, that they might be separated from the follies of other nations, and might keep the eternal truth that the One God must be obeyed. While they were obedient, they were at peace: if they disobeyed, they were afflicted; and thus they learned to believe and preserve the truth, till the day when the holy Jesus came to shed a fuller light into the souls of men. Yet it was the same faith which had been given in narrower measure to Adam, to Noah, and to Abraham.

The signs of the covenant with Moses were many, said Havilah. It was he who said unto Pharaoh after the miracles which had been done in Egypt, “Thou well knowest that none hath sent down these evident signs except the Lord of heaven and earth, and I truly esteem thee, O Pharaoh, a lost man†!” Truly the Lord was with Moses.

* Genesis xvii. 18—21.

† Koran, chap. 17.

Eber replied, When the people had been led forth with miracles from Egypt, and when Moses had seen the glory of God, and when there had been thunders and fire and clouds, and the sound of a trumpet on the Mount, Jehovah said again, "Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people among whom thou art shall see the work of the Lord: for it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee."—"Behold I drive out before thee the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest*." Thus was it done, so that the land of promise was given to Abraham's seed.

The fifth dispensation, said Havilah, was greater than all that had gone before. When it was about to be given, the angels stood afar off to gaze, even as when man was first created; and the Despairing One shrank back to hide himself, believing that his hour of punishment was come.

Man was indeed newly created on that day, said Eber; for eternal life was then offered to him. Then indeed began the warfare against the Powers of Evil, by which they shall surely be overthrown.

Here again, said Havilah, was the eternal truth revealed, and by signs from God was it again confirmed.

That truth was not shown in part, to one nation, as before, replied Eber. It is shown forth in the Gospel as clearly as the sun at noon-day; and it can never again be obscured. No more shall there be light among the Hebrews, while darkness, as in the dwellings of Egypt, covers all besides. No more shall there be hopeless wailings for the dead in some dwellings, while there is peace among others. All men shall come to Jesus to partake of life, and to be assured of immortality. The blessings of his Gospel are so many and so deep, that men shall not know them fully till they speak of them one to another on the judgement-day; and the wisdom which it teaches is so given, that it opens out as men watch for it; it comes forth as they need it. It has never been fathomed; it

* Exodus xxxiv. 10, &c.

can never be exhausted: and if the earth should endure for many thousand years, the wisest man of the last and wisest age may yet learn of the Gospel of Jesus as thy child learneth of thee. God giveth no more dispensations, for this brings man to the very gates of heaven. Besides this, he gives no further revelation; for by this is his truth perpetually brightening forth, as the radiance increases from the early dawn till noon. By this Gospel may we know him as fully as we can know him till we see him face to face in heaven; therefore we know that his plan is completed. Neither can there be any higher sign than that which sanctified this last covenant.—Jesus was raised from the dead: and as this sign shall at length be acknowledged over all the earth, none other shall be given but those which the spirit of the Gospel worketh in the heart of every man.

Nay but, said Havilah, one other dispensation there has already been, and new signs attested it.—The revelations of God have been six; and the sixth is that of Mohammed.

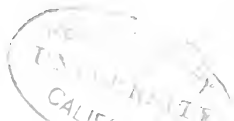
As I have said, replied Eber, Mohammed was wise, and many things which he said were true: but I believe that those truths had been told before, and that his wisdom was not from above. Read again, and meditate as thou hast meditated this day, and it shall be plain unto thee that there is nothing true, or pure, or lofty, which may not be found in the teachings of Jesus; nothing just, or mild, or holy, which was not in his character; nothing awful, which was not in his mission; nothing that righteous men can desire, which that mission has not secured to them. Tell me of any mighty sign which Mohammed has done, and which Christ did not surpass: tell me of any innocent desire which Mohammed was more ready than Jesus to fulfill; of any hope or fear given by Jesus, which Mohammed hath exalted: tell me of any new truth displayed by your Prophet, of which Jesus was not aware; show me that his dispensation is more certain to last, and more fit to be spread abroad in the earth than that of Christ,—and then will I own that there may be a better faith than that of Christians,

and a greater prophet than Jesus. Let us read and think, and by their own deeds and words let each prophet be judged.

Be it so, replied Havilah; and then shall we be of one mind. Do the Christians believe, as the Faithful, that the multitude of the prophets and Apostles have been kept pure from great sins that they might purify the world? If they do thus believe, how is it that Judas is of the number of the Apostles?

The Christians know not, replied Eber, as the followers of Mohammed declare, that the number of the prophets has been many thousands; nor of the Apostles, properly so called, do they number more than thirteen;—viz. the twelve whom Jesus chose at the beginning of his mission, and Paul, who was called by miracle to be the Apostle of the Gentiles. Since a light from heaven was shed into the hearts of the prophets, and wisdom was laid upon their lips; since they knew God, and understood his judgements better than the people to whom they spoke, their faith was firmer, and their lives were more holy than those of men who were less favoured. Thus was Samuel devoted to the Lord, so that his name shall be venerated for ever. Thus Elijah strongly reprov'd the worshipers of Baal, saying, “Do ye not fear God? Do ye invoke Baal, and forsake the most excellent Creator? God is your Lord, and the Lord of your forefathers*.” And therefore was Elijah beloved of God as one of his most faithful servants. Thus hath Elisha been ever esteemed holy; and the name of Isaiah is great; and the fidelity of Daniel is yet more esteemed than his wisdom. Yet the Prophets were men, and, however wise, were sometimes subject to folly; and, however strong in the spirit, they sometimes fell when pressed by temptation. Did not Moses murmur at some of the commands of God? And where was the faith of Jonah, when he would have fled from before the face of the Lord? Yet no man supposes that the

* Koran, chap. 37.



word of God is injured by the frailty of those who speak it. Rather is his wisdom shown forth the more clearly by their folly, and his strength by their weakness ; since the thoughts which they spoke were higher than their own thoughts, and the ways which they pointed out were truer than those which they had found.

But the Apostles, said Havilah, must have been pure ; since their office was not only to speak as God gave them authority, but to reclaim men from infidelity and superstition. Theirs was the highest office next to that of the six revealers of God's dispensations ; and though some were more excellent than others, yet all must have been free from great sins ; and of their whole number, which our traditions relate to have been three hundred and thirteen, there can have been none so guilty as your Scriptures declare Judas to have been.

Eber replied, God rules in the hearts of all men ; and in as far as he has given to any who are wise to make known his will and to convert their brethren, they may be said to be sent by him, and may bear the name of his Apostles : the number of such faithful servants cannot be reckoned by us, or by any men. But of those who were chosen or sent forth by Christ, and who in distinction from other men are called Apostles, it is clear that others besides Judas were not altogether sinless. Not only did Peter deny his Lord, but the other witnesses of Christ forsook him and fled.

How unfit were such to be Apostles ! exclaimed Havilah.

Rather were they the more fit, replied Eber ; and herein is another proof that the ways of God are wiser than our ways. These men were chosen to bear witness of Jesus, especially of his resurrection : and when men saw that they who had been dispersed in terror on the death of their Lord reassembled fearlessly after they had seen him alive again, and from that time preached in his name, through persecution and tor-

ture and in the face of death,—it was believed that Christ had risen indeed. If these men had not first needed to be themselves persuaded, they would not so certainly have convinced others.

Yet, said Havilah, how can the words of teachers from heaven be weighty, if their faith be not firm, and their lives holy?

Such was the faith of the Apostles, replied Eber; and such were their lives. Where, except in Christ himself, was ever beheld such faith as in Paul, when he went to Jerusalem, well knowing that bonds and afflictions awaited him; and when he preached the Gospel in prison; and when, believing that he was soon to die for his religion, he wrote to his friends of his hope and joy in the faith? Where was there ever greater fervour than in Peter, when he first taught the Gospel to the Gentiles; or greater purity than in his Epistles to the brethren? Whose love was ever more gentle than the love of John? And where was ever seen another band of brethren who devoted life and met death in like manner, through faith in God and love to man? Many wise men, many holy, many benignant, has God sent into the world; but the chiefest of these, except the Lord Jesus, were the Apostles.

Why then was Judas among them? asked Havilah.

Of all the witnesses of Christ, replied Eber, none has testified to him more effectually than Judas; though the testimony was against his own will. Judas was chosen, not that he might preach the Gospel and rejoice in it, as his brethren; for Christ knew from the beginning that the heart of Judas was unfaithful. He was chosen, that through him it might be shown that the deeds and words of Jesus were pure, since no accusation could be brought against him by one who had dwelt with him and beheld all that he did. By the remorse of Judas it was shown that he knew Christ to be true; and by the death of Judas it was proved, in the sight of all the people, that guilt and punishment were with the enemies of Jesus, and innocence and triumph with him and with his followers.

By the guilt of his life and the horror of his death Judas testified to the Lord, no less than his brethren by their holiness and joy.

Thou hast declared, said Havilah, that no more prophets shall come. Shall there also be no more apostles?

I believe that to no more shall be given the power of working miracles. But by the Gospel it is given to every true believer to be, in some sense, an apostle. It is given to all to show forth in themselves the purity which Jesus taught, and the hope which he gave. It is given to all to declare how great is the favour of God in teaching men the truth, and in offering to them a happier life than this, beyond the grave. If Christians are strong in faith, and fervent, and pure, and gentle, like Paul, and Peter, and John, and if like them they labour diligently to give of their faith to others, they may enjoy as much favour from above, and as much peace from within, as if they had been Apostles indeed.

VI.—*Of Death and Judgement.*

It was early in the morning, before Eber had gone forth from his chamber, when he heard a voice calling Aza. It was the child of Havilah who sought the old man: and when he could not find him in the house, nor in the porch, nor in the garden, he came to ask of Eber whether he had seen him.—Eber would have gone forth with the boy to seek his friend, but in a moment the child was gone. After a while he came back weeping; and he took Eber's hand and led him forth silently. They passed under the palms, and beside the stream till they came to the field of tombs; and there the child pointed to the place where Aza lay along the ground, his face covered by his robe. Eber feared to disturb him, if he should be at prayer or in sorrow; yet he knew not but that sickness or death might have seized on him suddenly. He said therefore to the child, Why is Aza here?

I know not, said the boy, still weeping;—when I found him, I pulled aside his robe and asked him to go with me into the field: but he bade me leave him, and come not to him again till tomorrow, because he mourns for the dead this day.

We will therefore depart, said Eber:—no eye should watch the mourner when his desire is to be alone.

But, said the boy, I cannot water the plants in my garden unless Aza help me. And who will tell me of the birds, and of the stars, if Aza be away? And I cannot sleep at noon unless he be beside me. O, if tomorrow were come!

Eber comforted the child and led him to the spring, and poured water upon his fruit-trees and flowers. Then he sat down in the shade, and took the child between his knees and talked with him.

For whom is Aza mourning this day? he asked.

I suppose it is for his sons who are dead, answered the child. He told me that his sons were once like me, and he used to talk to them as he talks to me. But they are dead, and he will not see them again till he himself is dead.

Then he surely hopes to see them again.

Yes; because the Prophet told where they and all the dead are gone, and where the living shall meet them again, and what is done in the grave and in Paradise.

Tell me, said Eber, what the Prophet has taught about the dead.

Nay, but Aza says that the Christians do not believe what the Prophet taught.

I am a Christian, said Eber; but I believe that the dead are gone where we shall see them again, and that there is a happy place which Aza calls Paradise, where the people who love God shall dwell for ever.

My father believes this too.

Yes: all people believe this, who have heard what Jesus Christ said of death, and who know how he raised to life persons who had been dead, and how he was raised up himself when the tomb had been closed over him.

While Eber told the child what miracles Christ had wrought upon the dead, Havilah drew near, and sat down to listen.—When Eber had done, the boy exclaimed,

I will go to Aza and tell him what Christ did to Lazarus, and how Martha hoped while she wept. Let me go to comfort Aza.

But Havilah forbade him : and when he wept again, his father took him into the house, that he might forget his grief amidst his sports.

When Havilah returned to his friend, he said : It is with the Gospel even as thou hast said. The wisest of men may meditate long on this story of Lazarus, and yet a child can understand it. If my boy were to behold Aza or myself carried to the tomb tomorrow, he would remember that Martha hoped while she wept, and would hope also. I have long believed in all that the Christian Scriptures tell of Lazarus, because it agrees with what our Prophet taught of the state of the dead.

Concerning the state between Death and the Judgement, said Eber, the Christians believe not that any revelation has been given ; for we know not even of those whom Jesus raised, or of Jesus himself, what was done when the body lay dead. Of them should we have heard if it had been intended that we should know.—The funeral wail for the daughter of Jairus had only begun when the Lord raised her up : and where her spirit was when her breath ceased, we know not.—The young man of Nain was on his bier, and men were carrying him to the grave, when Jesus restored him to his mother ; —from him also we know nothing of what Death appeared to him.—Lazarus had been in the sepulchre four days, when a voice from heaven bade him come forth ;—yet that voice gave no command that he should reveal aught that had befallen him in the tomb. Neither did the Lord, who told us all that we know of a life beyond the grave, explain when the Judgement should be, and what is the state of the dead till that hour.

To Mohammed was it given to tell these things, said Havilah*. And he has left us not only the tradition which he commanded should not be forgotten, but certain words in the Book by which we know how to look for the Dread Ones in the grave. It is merciful in God thus to have given warning by his Prophet; for it would be a more fearful thing than the spirit could bear, to meet the angels without being prepared. And as for the anguish of the serpents,—who could endure it but they who knew that it must come because their sins were great?

Is it possible that my friend knows not, said Eber, that this tradition was told among the Jews many hundred years before Mohammed entered the world? The torment of the grave is by them called “the beating of the sepulchre;” and they believe that all men must undergo it, but those only who die on the evening of the Sabbath, or who have dwelt in the land of Israel.

But, replied Havilah, to what Jew was it ever given to know whither the spirit departs till the day of the resurrection†? Who but Mohammed beheld how the prophets enter at once on the bliss of Paradise; and how the Faithful are at peace under the care of God, while the wicked are thrown into a dungeon in the lowest earth? Who but Mohammed knew when the spirits hovered near the graves, so that he might salute them; and gave assurance that his salutations were heard by the dead as well as the living, though they could not answer?

The Christians thus believed before Mohammed was born, answered Eber; and it was their custom first to pray, and afterwards to offer gifts at the tombs of holy persons: and thus arose the superstition of worshiping the saints, and Mary the mother of Jesus. Thus the idolatry which is offensive to us both, arose from the superstition which Mohammed adopted from the Christians, and encouraged in his followers.

* Prelim. Dissert. page 77.

† Ibid. page 77—78.

If the Christians thus believed, said Havilah, whence came their belief?

Not from their Lord, nor from his Apostles; but from certain philosophers, who mingled some superstitions of the pagans concerning the soul with the purer religion of Christ.—By the Gospel we know that there is life after death. But how life is renewed, and where and when men shall receive their lot of good or evil, God has given it unto no man to reveal.

Havilah replied, Unto no man indeed has it been given to reveal when the day of resurrection shall be; nor is it known even to the angels*. Our Prophet asked of Gabriel concerning it; and even he who writes down the decrees of God had not been told this secret.

This also did Mohammed learn from the Christians, replied Eber, for it is written in their Scriptures how Jesus said, “Of that day and that hour knoweth no man; no, not the angels of heaven, but the Father only.”

But, answered Havilah, unto Mohammed was it given to declare the signs which shall be in the earth when that day is approaching†. The lesser signs are; that the faith shall decay among men, and that there shall be troubles and seditions, and so great distress in the world, that men shall look on the graves and sigh to be at peace within them.

Eber answered, When Jesus warned his followers of a great and terrible day of the Lord, he said, “When the Son of Man cometh shall he find faith on the earth?” Again, “There shall be wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. All these things are the beginning of sorrows.” Again, “There shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world unto this time, nor ever shall be.” These words of Jesus were written more than five hundred years before Mohammed was born, and from those writings he learned them.—Now tell me the greater signs of that day.

* Prelim. Dissert. page 79.

† Ibid.

Havilah replied, The sun shall rise in the west, and the moon shall be eclipsed, and a smoke shall go forth to fill the whole earth. The beast of which the Prophet told shall arise out of the earth, and its mark shall be on the faces of men according as they are believers or infidels. Antichrist shall also come, and many false prophets under him. There shall be many wars, and much fire and slaughter; and rivers shall flow abroad and leave their channels dry. The Jews shall meet with a terrible destruction, and few of them shall be hidden from the slaughter. Then shall Jesus descend from heaven, and under him shall the righteous live in peace; till the great wind shall arise, which shall bear away together the Faithful whom God hath chosen, that they may not be destroyed with the world, when the end shall come*.—These are the greater signs by which men may know that the day is at hand.

Then Eber took from his bosom the Book of the Gospel, and pointed out several portions of it to his friend, saying, See if to Mohammed indeed these many signs were first made known. It was not of the same great day that he and Jesus spoke; but of the Gospel did your Prophet learn the signs.

Then Havilah read, “The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken†.” “And I beheld a beast coming up out of the earth:—and he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hands, or in their foreheads‡.” “If any man shall say unto you, Lo! here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that (if it were possible) they shall deceive the elect themselves§.” “Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there shall be famines, and pestilences,

* Prelim. Dissert. pp. 79, 80.

† Rev. xiii.

‡ Matth. xxiv. 29.

§ Matth. xxiv. 23, 24.

and earthquakes, in divers places*.” “Then (when armies are round about Jerusalem,) let them which are in Judea flee into the mountains: let him who is on the house-top not come down to take anything out of his house: neither let him that is in the field return back to take his clothes. And alas for them who are with child, and for them who give suck in those days! And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved †.” “Then men shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.—Now learn a parable of the fig-tree; When its branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh. So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors ‡.”

Havilah looked at his friend in surprise when he had read. —I knew not, he said, that so many of the signs of the Prophet were told in the Christian Scriptures. Here are also some which Mohammed said should take place at the hour of resurrection; such as that a star should fall, and the trumpet should be sounded, and that a woman should abandon her sucking child.

Tell me other signs of the resurrection, said Eber; and perhaps we shall find that they also were written before Mohammed was born.

The heavens shall melt, said Havilah, and the angels who stand between heaven and earth to guide the stars, shall die; and the last angel who shall die will be the angel of Death. And the water of Life which flows from under the throne of God shall be given unto men.

Then Eber opened the volume again, and read from the Book of Revelations concerning the angels who stood between heaven and earth; and how Death should be destroyed; and how the river of Life flows from under the throne of God.—

* Matth. xxiv. 7.

† Ibid. 16—22.

‡ Ibid. 30—33.

Henceforth, said he to Havilah, read of these things as they were first written ; and then shall the truth appear what these signs are, and whereof they signify.

Is it not of the day of resurrection that Jesus spoke ? asked Havilah.

Let every one judge for himself, said Eber ; but none can judge till he has read the whole.

I have heard from thyself, said Havilah, that every Christian believes that there is a resurrection for every man.

Even so, said Eber ; and that there is a just judgement for all. This is the greatest of all the truths which Christ was appointed to make known. Till he came, there was only the hope of every man's own mind that the dead should live again. Jesus has made this hope sure and steadfast, by bringing a promise from God, and by arising from the sepulchre himself, and ascending into heaven in the sight of many. Till Christ came, they who mourned for the dead earnestly desired to know whither they had departed, or whether they should indeed exist no more. They looked around for signs of what should become of the life of man. They saw how trees, whose branches had been bare, put forth leaves again as the seasons changed : and while they saw this, they hoped. But they also beheld how the human body is sometimes turned to dust, and scattered to the four winds ; and then they feared that no new life could spring from such remains. Again, they watched the dragon-fly as it came forth from the reeds where it abode as a worm, and spread its silken wings in the sunshine ; and then there was again a hope that if from so mean a body so beautiful a life could arise, life might also issue from the grave.— But in all this there was no certainty : and those who now read what Paul wrote concerning the resurrection, look back upon the doctrines of ancient times as a man remembers the idle tales of his childhood. The believing Christian is no longer perplexed when the hour is come for himself or for any whom he loves ; but a sure hope sustains him when he suffers, and consoles him when he mourns.

There is, however, no hope without fear, declared Havilah. Both just and unjust must be tormented long and grievously till their lot is fixed : and though the guilty shall suffer infinitely the most, there is no one who can escape wholly, or who can therefore die entirely without fear*.

It is true, replied Eber, that no man is altogether holy : and since every secret thing is to be brought into judgement, all who are conscious of evil deeds and of impure thoughts must tremble in the belief of the punishment which awaits such deeds and thoughts. Great is the woe of the guilty, therefore, when their hour is coming : but the just man so loves God, and is so beloved of him, that the judgement becomes a joyful rather than a fearful thing. The just man knows that God is merciful to forgive sins on repentance ; and while he mourns the evil he has done, he yet trusts in the love of his Father, and longs to draw nearer to him, that he may know and love him continually. If God is the Judge, he is also the Father of men ;—and who that is obedient, should fear to meet a father perfect in justice and in love ?

In the end we know, replied Havilah, that the righteous shall be fully blest † ; but the terrors of the judgement-day are for all.

I believe, answered Eber, that there shall be much that is awful to be beheld ; much that cannot now be conceived by those who have seen only the things which are done upon the earth ;—but that there shall be pain of body or anguish of spirit for the righteous while they stand in God's presence, I do not believe. Christ hath not so taught ; and if the Father be indeed merciful, this cannot be true. It is with death, as it was but yesterday with the darkness that spread over the land at noon-day. Every man knew that the sun should be eclipsed, and it was eclipsed for all alike ; yet some looked upon it with delight, and others with horror ; some with calmness, and others with doubt. Some covered their faces when they saw

* Prelim. Dissert. p. 86.

† Ibid. p. 87.

how the cold shadow crept over the radiant earth, how the flowers closed themselves up, and the birds were hushed, and the flocks lay down together;—for such beholders were guilty, and they feared judgement from God. Others looked up with wonder, and feared they knew not what;—for they were ignorant. But because the wise and the innocent know not fear, Ramul the sage watched with satisfaction how all came to pass as he had foreknown; and thy child leaped upon thy bosom with joy, and smiled to see the stars come forth amidst the darkness.—Thus in death may the pure repose on the love of his Maker.

There are some, innocent as my child, said Havilah, who, as the Prophet declared, shall enter Paradise without being judged. For such there is no fear, when they have once passed out of the excessive heat of the sun. But for all those whose works shall be weighed, there is surely fear and sorrow. My child would fear to give an account to me if he knew that he had done evil,—and what man, I again ask, is wholly pure?

None, replied Eber; but they who love God have already confessed their sins before they are judged. If they have deeply and truly repented, there is hope of free forgiveness; if not, they will meekly endure their punishment, and not love God the less. The more men love God, the less will they fear to stand before him; and if there were any who loved perfectly, they would fear nothing, knowing that their Father giveth perfect peace hereafter to such as perfectly obey.

Havilah answered, If our friend Aza believed as the Christians believe, he would not mourn for his sons with so bitter a grief as at this very hour.

Is his grief, asked Eber, for them, or for himself, because he is left childless in his old age?

Many are the tears which he has shed, replied Havilah, when he has seen the sons of other men going forth to war, or joining the company in the pilgrimage: but his greatest fear and sorrow is for them, though they were his delight in their lives, and his pride in their death. In their religion

they were faithful; their hands were clean, and their hearts pure.

Whence, then, are the fears of Aza?

The terrors of the judgement-day are ever before him. I have seen him look up to the sun; and, remembering how it shall one day leave its place*, and afflict with a burning heat all who wait for judgement, cover his face with his garment. I have marked his clenched hands and frowning brow when he has heard how long men must stand in torment awaiting the judgement; and in the night-time I have been roused by his cry, "They have fallen! They are lost!" and then I knew that he dreamed of the narrow way over the abyss†.—When I have awakened him, and declared my belief that his children and himself shall alike pass the narrow way in safety, he has wiped the sweat from his brow, saying only, "The will of God be done!"—Thus does his fear almost overcome his faith.

Eber exclaimed, Would that men could discern what is the will of God, as well as strive to submit to it! Who would not grieve for the anguish of Aza, and of many who have suffered like him, if it were shown that this superstition of the sun being unsheathed had been devised by the Jews many ages ago; that from them and from the Magians, and not from on high, had Mohammed heard of the narrow bridge over the bottomless pit of fire? This will I show to Aza from the ancient books of the Jews. Would I could show it likewise to all who have vainly suffered from this tradition of your Prophet?

I impute it not to Mohammed as a falsehood, said Havi-lah. If it were believed first among the Jews, it may yet be true.

I lay it to Mohammed's charge, replied Eber, that he has made worse that which was no better than a superstition among the Jews.—They supposed that idolaters alone were

* Prelim Dissert. p. 86.

† Ibid. p. 91.

subject to these torments and trials: Mohammed declares that the righteous shall share them. If it were so, I could no longer call God the tender Father of men.

Yet his mercy is finally sure, replied Havilah; for Mohammed himself will intercede for men*, and to him nothing is refused. In him is our only hope in that day; for no other prophet, neither Adam, nor Noah, nor Abraham, nor Moses, nor even Jesus, will intercede for so many who are guilty in great things or small.

In God himself is my hope, replied Eber. Though many prophets, though angels who stand about the throne should offer to intercede for me, I would not accept their intercession. I would say, "God is just, therefore will I trust in him. God is merciful, therefore will I hope in him. God is my Father, therefore will I draw nigh unto him; and none shall interpose between us. I will myself seek his forgiveness: what he grants, I will joyfully receive; that which he may inflict, I will patiently bear."—Thus should it be, where there is love between a father and his child. Thus it is between God and man, as Jesus showed when he declared that there was no need of intercession with God. Harken to his words: "I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you; for the Father himself loveth you†." I trust our friend Aza feels that no intercessor is needed between the mourner and Him who causes mourning;—and if not here on earth, why hereafter, when we shall be drawn yet nearer to God?

Let us go, said Havilah, and comfort Aza, as I have been wont to comfort him, with the truth that according to the thoughts of the heart and the deeds of the hands shall man be judged. In this the Christians and the Faithful alike believe; and in this may they who mourn the innocent have confidence, and be consoled.

When Havilah and Eber drew near the place of tombs, they saw that Aza had risen from the ground; and though his head

* Prelim. Dissert. p. 87.

† John xvi. 26, 27.

was bowed as he sat in the shade, his countenance was calm, so that they feared not to approach. The child of Havilah had hidden himself in the trees afar off, that he might watch the mourner without being seen. At length the old man beheld, and smiled upon him. Then the boy came running with a joyful cry, and cast himself down on the grass, and hid his face in Aza's garment.

VII.—*Of Reward and Punishment.*

As Eber and Havilah passed along the street, they heard voices of wailing from a dwelling which had been the abode of Nathan the Jew.

Nathan is dead, said Havilah; and in this place, where he has so often stilled the cries of the sorrowful, their mourning is renewed because he has departed. Tears now are shed abundantly where he scattered blessings, and gloom has descended on many souls to whom his eye was as a light in the midst of darkness. Behold how sorrowful are the faces of the poor who come to his door to pray for help for themselves, as they have often prayed for blessings on him! There shall be mourning in all the city for him this day, though he was an Infidel.

Eber replied: The young men came to learn wisdom of Nathan, and even the fathers of the people sought his counsel. O that I had entered his dwelling as often as he invited me!—that I had prized his friendship more, while it was to be found! He is gone, and the remembrance of his wisdom and his benignity is all that remains.

Then Eber was silent, and his friend also; for their hearts were heavy.—When they had left the city and were come where no one saw them, Havilah sat down and wept. His friend looked on his excessive grief with wonder and sorrow, and strove to console him.

Why is it, my friend, he said, that one who was not the

friend of Nathan, mourns more for him than one who was? Thou hast not, as I, conversed with him in his dwelling, or walked with him in the field, or reasoned concerning God and his ways towards man; yet thy sorrow is as for a brother. Explain this to me.

Not alone, said Havilah, do I mourn for the poor and helpless of the city, for there are others who will relieve and protect them; nor chiefly because one so wise is taken from us, for he taught of his wisdom to many who will not let his words be forgotten. Nor do I fear for his household; they will console themselves with remembering what he was, and will talk together of the hour when they hope to meet him again.—My sorrow is for Nathan himself.

Eber answered gravely, Does my friend afflict himself with the superstitions which I pitied Aza for believing? Dost thou fear for the departed the beating of the sepulchre, or the torment of excessive heat while waiting for judgement, or the danger of the narrow way over the abyss?

Alas! I fear worse things than these.

What are the blessings which wait upon righteousness, cried Eber, if the lot of the righteous after death can be so fearful? Nathan loved God, and served him with all his heart: he was just towards man, and was as a father or a brother to all whom he could assist. He was pure in his life, and fervent in his hope of a better state.—Does not the blessing of God rest on the grave of such a man, as well as on his house?

Nay, replied Havilah, but he was an Infidel: and the Book says concerning the Jewish unbelievers, “Do ye therefore believe in part of the book of the Law, and reject other part thereof? But whoso among you doeth this, shall have no other reward than shame in this life, and on the day of resurrection they shall be sent to a most grievous punishment; for God is not regardless of that which ye do. These are they who have purchased this present life at the price of that which

is to come; wherefore their punishment shall not be mitigated, neither shall they be helped *.” And when there was a dispute between the Faithful and the Jews, whether God showed most favour to those who lived under the Old Law or those who received the New, these words were revealed to the Prophet: “These are two opposite parties who dispute concerning their Lord. And they who believe not shall have garments of fire fitted unto them, boiling water shall be poured on their heads, and they shall be beaten with maces of iron. So often as they shall endeavour to get out of hell because of the anguish of their torments, they shall be dragged back into the same; and it shall be said unto them, Taste ye the pain of burning †.”

Truly, said Eber, of such as disbelieve through wickedness is this said. There are some who forget God, and delight in sin all their lives long; for such there is a dreadful punishment: There are also some who will not believe that there is a Judge on high, though their spirits tremble before him in the midst of their guilt; for such there is a fearful account: There are yet others who are careless concerning the truth, and who think themselves safe in their own righteousness without inquiring into the will of God; for such there shall be a day when the eyes of their minds shall be opened with great astonishment and fear.—But Nathan was among none of these.

Yet was he an unbeliever; and for unbelievers there is no hope.

That Nathan remained a Jew, replied Eber, I ever felt, as I feel now, surprise and sorrow. To himself I have often said this, and he heard me patiently. I am persuaded that in this thing he was less wise than in other things; that he knew not all the reasons why Jesus should be believed in as the Messiah, and that he had not examined into this truth as into

* Koran, chap. 2.

† Ibid. chap. 22.

many others. Yet since his unbelief was not the unbelief of a guilty heart, but of a prejudiced mind, I fear not for him the doom of the wicked.

The Prophet has said, replied Havilah, that there is no guilt so great as that of unbelief: therefore may the sins of the Faithful be pardoned when the virtues of Infidels avail them nothing.

This then is the reason, answered Eber, that my friend has no hope for Nathan, while for Sachem he spoke but yesterday of forgiveness and future peace. Yet Sachem was indevout, and cruel, and given to excess: no man loved him, and the poor rejoiced in his death.

Havilah replied, Sachem spoke the name of Mohammed ere he died, and he shall therefore be forgiven. Does my friend believe that any man to whom God had sent his Prophets and his Law,—any man whom he had made capable of knowing the high things of religion,—any man whose soul could receive the truth, can be confined in the fires of hell for ever?

Surely not, replied Eber. If it were so, then would God forget his mercy, and men could no longer love him as their Father: for he knows the issues of all things from the beginning, and whatsoever is in the hearts of men is his work, and he will not recompense evil for ever and ever. Therefore I also hope for Sachem, that when he shall have received his full punishment, he shall be prepared for a pure and happy life:—but for Nathan I have yet a greater hope.

Compare not a Jew with the meanest of the Faithful, said Havilah.

Mohammed himself compared them, said Eber, when he gave judgement in favour of a Jew, and against one of his own followers: and it is forbidden to no one to reason of God's providence towards his children. I therefore declare my belief, that the faith of such men as Sachem will not lessen the punishment of their guilt, since it did not preserve them from guilt: but I also feel assured that the wisdom of Nathan,

however great, would have been greater ; his virtues, however exalted, more exalted ; and his hope, however serene, yet more firm, if he had received the Gospel and taken to himself its blessings and its promises. When I shall meet with a Christian as virtuous as Nathan, I shall think him more blessed, and shall await his judgement with a more exalted hope.

Havilah replied, This condemnation of unbelievers was not, then, one of the things which Mohammed learned of Christ ?

There are words in the Gospel, replied Eber, which Mohammed may have misinterpreted, as many Christians do at this day, supposing them to be spoken of the state after death, instead of the reception of the Gospel in the world. But that Jesus and his followers believed that all men should finally be blessed, appears from the many promises they gave that holiness and peace should at length conquer sin and woe, and that every soul should rejoice finally in the grace of God through Christ Jesus. The punishment which they threatened was for the impious and the impure, and not for those who, like Nathan, fulfilled the Law while they understood it not. Great and terrible beyond what we can conceive shall be the retribution of the judgement-day, and the woe which shall succeed unto those, whatever be their faith, whose guilt shall be made known ; but, as surely as God is good, to none shall that woe be eternal.

Yet, replied Havilah, there is consolation for such as fear for Sachem and pity him : they may pray for him ; but for unbelievers we may not pray.

Eber looked at his friend surprised, and said, Is it not permitted by Mohammed to pray for the miserable and for the guilty ? and are not Infidels esteemed miserable and guilty ?

While Infidels live, answered Havilah, all may pray for them, because there is hope : but when they are known to be condemned, we may no longer pray for them. Since Sachem died in the faith of the Prophet, there is hope that his punishment may be remitted ; but from unbelief there is no redemption, when once the breath has departed : as the Book

declares; "If thou ask forgiveness for them seventy times, God will by no means forgive them*."

I doubt not, replied Eber, that the guilty shall suffer for his guilt, though every living voice should cry out for mercy upon him: but that punishment, however fearful, shall not in any case be everlasting, I am assured, if the Scriptures are to be believed. Did not Mohammed teach that the woes which follow sin shall purify from sin, so that happiness shall be enjoyed at last?

Even so, replied Havilah, when they who have been punished shall be brought forth from amidst the flames†, they shall be bathed in the rivers of Paradise, till they shall be as pure as the blessed themselves.

How said the Prophet that the blessed obtained their bliss?

Not by their own works‡, replied Havilah, since no man's works are wholly pure; but by the gift of God.

This is surely true, replied Eber, since all things are ordered by God, and all blessings are gifts of his love. Did the Prophet teach that all who enter Paradise are equally blessed?

No: it is taught throughout the Book that there will be abodes of more eminent bliss for some than for others; the prophets being more favoured than the apostles, and the apostles than the martyrs, and the martyrs than they who have not suffered for the faith. The poor also shall be more blessed than the rich§.

These things Mohammed learned of the Gospel, said Eber. I have told thee of the parable of the rich man who in this life had his good things, and the poor man who in the next world lay in Abraham's bosom, because in the midst of his sickness and poverty on earth he had remembered Moses and the prophets, and obeyed them. This parable Mohammed no doubt heard; and that Jesus said "How hard is it for a rich man to enter the kingdom of Heaven!" That some shall be

* Koran, chap. 9.

† Prelim. Dissert. p. 97.

‡ Prelim. Dissert. p. 93.

§ Ibid. p. 98.

more blessed than others we may also believe, since Paul wrote, that as there is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and yet another glory of the stars, and as even one star differeth from another star in glory, so it shall be with the dead when they arise.

Havilah replied, How say the Christians, then, that the Gospel declares not what shall be the rewards of another life, while the punishments are made known? They agree with the Faithful that torrents of fire are prepared for the wicked. But if we speak of the delights of Paradise, of the gold and silver, and perfumes, or of the water which flows for ever, or of the wine which makes not drunken, or of the tree of immortal fruits, or of any other pleasures which Mohammed has promised, the Christians declare that it is profane to imagine the bliss which yet we most earnestly seek after.

Eber answered, That it is profane to imagine the pleasures for which we hope, I do not believe; but rather that it is well-pleasing to God that our thoughts should be much there where we desire to be when we die. Believing this, it is my delight to hope for those things hereafter which now yield me the most happiness, doubting not that every pleasure shall be exalted and purified and increased, in a measure which I cannot yet understand;—as your prophet has said, after Isaiah and Paul, that “no eye hath seen, or ear heard, or heart conceived what bliss is prepared for those who love God.” The Gospel leaves every man free thus to imagine what are the rewards of heaven, for it is certain that no assurance is given there by which we may know what shall be done.

How, then, hast thou learned that the blessed shall differ one from another in glory, like the lights of heaven?

Because not only has Paul declared this; but there are many assurances that as men sow they shall reap, and that according to their deeds they shall be rewarded. I know, therefore, that the most faithful and pure shall be the most happy: but wherein their happiness shall consist we are nowhere told.

Then all Christians believe not alike concerning the happiness for which they hope? It is thus with the Faithful: some of whom delight themselves with the expectation of the fruits and waters of life, and others of the splendour of the dwellings, and others of the sports which no evil accidents shall interrupt; while there are yet others (among whom I am one) who believe that all these enjoyments shall be forgotten in the higher bliss of beholding the face of God morning and evening*. This is surely the superabundant recompense which the Book promises, but which it has not explained.

Does not my friend perceive, replied Eber, that if the Book had been from God, it would have promised the superabundant recompense alone, as the Gospel has done, so that all men in all countries and in all times might have an equal share in its promises? To me it is plain that this one promise which Mohammed learned from the Gospel is the only promise concerning future bliss in which the Prophet is to be believed. All the other delights which he has described are from his own imagination; and though he was free to imagine paradise as it seemed to him most fair and precious, it is impious to deliver to others as a revelation from God the fancies which have sprung up in a man's own thoughts. I am persuaded that Mohammed did thus, because the paradise which he described would not be a paradise to many, unless they imagine for themselves the nature of the superabundant recompense of which he spoke. There are men who dwell in lands where the cold is excessive; such would not think with delight on the cooling streams of paradise, like the thirsty traveller in the desert. There are many who eat nothing but the flesh of beasts, and who know not even the names of pomegranates, and grapes, and figs;—what are to them the fruits of paradise? If, as your Prophet supposed, his religion should spread among the inhabitants of these lands, the paradise he describes would not be tempting to them. Again, men who

* Prelim. Dissert. p. 100.

ardently seek after knowledge are indifferent about the ease of their couches and the splendour of their dwellings, and despise the sports in which the ignorant please themselves.—Yet again, men who love holiness above all things, turn from the delights of the eye and the ear, unless so far as these delights nourish the soul. Such men look for purer enjoyments on high than the body can receive; and not only hope to behold the face of God themselves, but that none of their companions shall be satisfied with a bliss less pure. Such regard with disgust the paradise of Mohammed.

Havilah replied, My friend has now spoken many of my own thoughts: but while there are eaters and drinkers in the world, may it not be well to persuade them to become devout, by promising the rewards which will please them most? Is not this the reason why the Book speaks so fully of paradise, leaving liberty to the wise to hope as they will?

Eber replied, In the Gospel this end is gained without degrading the promises of God. It is sufficient to promise, on the sure word of God, that the bliss of the righteous shall be great:—then they who endeavour to become righteous will not only hope for the highest bliss they can conceive, but will conceive of a higher and a higher perpetually. Thy child now desires to taste of the rivers of honey in paradise, and to gather up the precious stones which shall there be scattered sparkling in the sunshine. When he is a youth, his imagination will prepare for him an abode where the beautiful daughters of paradise may dwell with him. When he becomes a man, he will rather hope for the delights of friendship than of love, and will expect such improvement in knowledge as his maturer mind desires. When he shall be yet older, he will above all things delight, as thou, in the thought of beholding the face of God morning and evening; and it may even be that his father and himself may yet desire (not a higher bliss, for a higher cannot be conceived, but) other pure delights connected with this. Thus it may be with him and thee before the day of death. Thus it might be with all, had less been

told in the Book concerning paradise: but there are many who, having arrived at the hope of enjoying the grosser delights, carry their desires no higher, saying, "It is thus written, —and hath not our Prophet revealed the truth?" How shall Mohammed answer at the judgement-day if such say unto him, "Behold, we are the meanest and the least blessed of all who are admitted to paradise. There is more joy among the holy, more joy among the wise, than there is for us. If thou hadst not tempted us with these meaner joys, we had been happier."—Such complaint can no one make against the Gospel: each shall be blessed according as he has power to enjoy, and praise shall therefore abound from all.

Even from the condemned, when they shall be purified, added Havilah.

From every living soul, replied Eber, when all shall be purified: but alas for the guilty till that day shall come!

How is it, asked Havilah, that the Gospel declares the punishment of the wicked, while concerning reward it is silent?

Many Christians believe as I, replied Eber, that no more is revealed of the one than of the other. The Scriptures speak sometimes of fire, and sometimes of utter darkness, and sometimes of the worm that feeds for ever:—but whether these things are spoken in a figure, and how often they are said of the misery of the guilty here, and how often of the punishment hereafter, each must judge for himself. It is sufficient to know that nothing can be so awful as the retribution which he is promised, nothing so fearful as the sentence of condemnation, nothing so dreadful as the recompense of anguish to every sinner. It is because I regard this anguish as so dreadful, that I am grieved that my friend should suppose one so wise, so pious, so tender-hearted as Nathan, to have become subject to it.

Far be it from me, said Havilah, to judge any man; but I have ever believed what the Prophet spoke.—As for Nathan, I have often said in my heart, "Would I were as he in all things, except his unbelief!"

For his unbelief, said Eber, I have ever grieved, and still grieve: but I look for the hour when there shall be no more unbelief in heaven or on earth. Till that hour, it is for those who believe to show by their works how precious is their faith. If Nathan, being a Jew, gave praise to God and blessings to man by his virtuous deeds,—shall not the shame be great to thee and me, if, with a more abundant faith, our good works shall be found less abundant than his?

Thus saying, Eber arose to return, that he might comfort the household of Nathan: while Havilah retired to the place of prayer.

VIII.—*Of the Absolute Decree of God.*

WHEN Eber returned, he found the child of Havilah weeping, while Aza told him that Nathan the Jew was dead, and how he died.

But yesterday, said the boy, I saw him, and he smiled upon me:—Now, he shall smile upon me no more. If I had known this, I would not have turned from him to my play.

Aza replied, Neither he, nor thou, nor any in the whole city, supposed that his hour was at hand; for no sickness was upon him, and the Angel of Death did not, as is his wont, cast shadows from his wings over the sunshine of the spirit. Even while the angel descended into the depth of yonder wood, Nathan went forth thither with an untroubled mind, not dreaming of the judgement which awaited him. I trust that thou, child, shalt be ever among the Faithful; but if it should be written that even thou shouldst become as Nathan the Jew, may the Disposer give thee such warning of his awful judgement as he gave not to Nathan!

Did not God, then, love Nathan?

My child, Nathan was a Jew, and received not the Prophet.

Eber then spoke, saying, Paul the Apostle was also a Jew,

and once received not the prophet of God, but even persecuted the faith; yet was he cared for by God, even in the days of his unbelief. God is a father to all men.

Yet mark, said Aza, the difference of his decrees according as men are faithful or infidels.—A viper came out of the fire, and fastened on the hand of Paul, who shook it off and was not harmed. A viper stung the foot of Nathan from among the grass, and he died. Such was the righteous judgement of God, who ordains all things from everlasting.

Was it written of old, inquired the child, that Paul should thus be saved, and that Nathan should thus die?

From everlasting, replied Aza, it has been written on the table of decrees, where also the Book was first inscribed.

Was it not also written that Paul should believe, and that Nathan should be an infidel?

It was; for God knows the mind and the spirit before they are created.

Why, then, was God angry with Nathan?

The wrath of God, replied Aza, is upon all unbelievers; as it is said in the Book, “They shall be set over the fire of hell; and God shall say, Taste the punishment due unto you because ye have disbelieved*.”

Then the child looked sorrowful and perplexed, and presently he turned to Eber, saying, Tell me, Why was the curse of God on Nathan,—why did he hate him before he was born?

God hath hated no man, replied Eber; and as for Nathan, I know that he was beloved of God.

So I indeed believe, cried the child joyfully, for God will not curse him whom all men love.

Listen to me, said Aza, and hear if he was not cursed in his death.—When he was going forth from his house, his wife would have prevented him, because the darkness was coming on; but he would not listen to her. His daughters also en-

* Koran, chap. 6.



treated him to remain, because the guests for whom he had prepared a feast were already at the door; but he refused them. The merchant was with him, in whose power his wealth was placed; and if he had staid to finish the business on which they were met, his riches would have been safe: but the eyes of his mind were blinded, and he rushed forth to meet his death unwarned by many warnings. He was brought back to his house dying. In his last moments he saw the despair of his wife and the grief of his children, and heard that the possessor of his wealth had fled, and that poverty awaited his household, for whom he had laboured many years.—Where is the wrath of God seen, if not in blindness and obstinacy and ruin like this?

Listen now to me, said Eber, and I will tell how the death of Nathan happened. I have been mourning with his household, and from themselves I learn the tale.—There was a feast prepared in Nathan's house; and when the guests were about to enter, Nathan's wife and his children saw that he was going hastily forth, and not knowing wherefore, they entreated him to stay. When, however, they heard that a young child of one of his servants could not be found, and was supposed to have gone out alone into the fields as it grew dark, they no longer urged him to remain. His sons, however, reminded him that his business with the merchant was yet unfinished; but he answered, "When I return, it shall be done: but if I were to stay now, the child might be lost by my delay." So every man of the household, and also the child's mother, hastened forth. It was Nathan who found the babe asleep in a thicket of yonder wood; but as he approached to lift up the little one, he trod on a viper, which stung him. When he met others of his household, he was already faint with pain. While he restored the child to its mother's bosom his strength failed him utterly; but seeing the woman's joy, he smiled, as he fell to the ground. His spirit was not overclouded by the despair of the mourners, for they had learned of him to be calm in the midst of grief. When he asked for the guilty

merchant, in order to finish his business if he yet had strength, his wife would have kept from him that the time to secure his wealth was past ; but by his questions he discovered all. Yet even at this was his spirit not long troubled ; but his eye was bright, and his voice strong through faith, as he said, " The Lord is your shepherd, ye shall not want ; for He shall lead you in green pastures, and beside the still waters. I will trust that his goodness and mercy shall follow you all the days of your lives : for thus has it been with me until this hour." Nathan died in peace : and as he did not feel, so do I not believe that any curse from God, or from angels, or from men, was upon him in his death. That he would have been more blessed if he had known what a greater than Moses has revealed of the ways of God and the things of a better life, I am convinced ; but though the highest and purest religious faith was not his, he was assuredly among the righteous who are beloved of God.

I will seek my father, said the child of Havilah, and entreat him to beware of the vipers in the grass, for even the Faithful are stung unawares.

According as it is written, answered Aza, do all which men call accidents befall them.

Whether they be unbelievers or believers, added Eber.

It is also determined, said Aza, whether or not they shall be believers ; else would I not suffer yonder child to listen to the teachings of a Christian ; and I would also warn his father against thy words, though in all other things, thy wisdom, Eber, is great ; and as for thy virtue, far be it from me to compare myself with thee.

As Havilah approached with the child, Aza repeated his last words.

Havilah replied, I believe as thou, that it is ordained already what the faith of the child shall be when he is a man ; for it is certain that all things are known to God, and determined by him from the beginning of time to the end. But since the same thing is not known to myself, I would not

bid the boy listen to Eber, unless the words of Eber were pure.

Why else, said Eber, is the boy forbidden to talk with the ignorant and the idle among the servants, while his father is ever pleased to see him at the feet of Aza?

But, said Aza, if the event is already certain, how matters it whether it be known or unknown to thyself? In either case thou canst not alter the decree.

It is true, replied Havilah; for the decrees of God have never been changed by the weak will of man: but this ignorance of the future is ordained by God, as the chief method by which the spirit of man is to be exercised, and his heart enlarged, and his holiness to be improved or perfected by the discipline which is appointed to him.

Explain this to me, said Aza; for I understand not how, if the end be fixed from the beginning, that which must happen between can be of any importance. Neither do I understand the reason why two persons who believe in the Book should differ where the Book speaks so plainly.

There are some of the Faithful, replied Havilah, who believe with thee, and some with me, and some in yet another manner; for though the Book speaks plainly in some parts, of the predestination of men, it yet contains some thoughts which appear to many to be inconsistent with this great doctrine. I will relate how the truth appears to me, when thou shalt first have spoken.

Far be it from me, said Aza, to doubt the words of the Book, or to disbelieve the words which the Prophet elsewhere spoke. Doth not the Book declare that "The fate of every man is bound about his neck *," and that "no soul can die unless by the permission of God †"? And hath not Mohammed told how Adam and Moses disputed before God ‡? "Thou," said Moses, "art Adam, whom God created and animated with the breath of life, and caused to be worshiped

* Koran, chap. 17. † Ibid. chap. 3. ‡ Prelim. Dissert. p. 163.

by the angels, and placed in Paradise, from whence mankind have been expelled for thy fault.—Whereto Adam answered, Thou art Moses, whom God chose for his apostle and entrusted with his Word, by giving thee the tables of the Law, and whom he vouchsafed to admit to discourse with himself. How many years dost thou find the Law was written before I was created? Moses said forty. Adam replied, Dost thou not find these words therein, ‘And Adam rebelled against the Lord and transgressed’? Which Moses confessing, Adam went on, Dost thou therefore blame me for doing that which God wrote of me that I should do, forty years before I was created; nay, for what was decreed concerning me fifty thousand years before the creation of heaven and earth?” Since Mohammed declared that Adam was right herein, I believe that he was so: and that the fate of every man is bound about his neck, like that of Adam. Therefore would I submit wholly to the will of God in all things. I would neither hope nor fear, nor exercise labour nor foresight. I would not flee from danger, nor seek after good. Neither would I mourn for the good which has departed from me, if God had given me a will as submissive as my faith is strong.

Eber looked with compassion on the old man, as he said, From Aza have many learned to resign themselves to the inflictions of God; but it is not to be wished that the submission of the heart should be such as the lips have now spoken. If thou hadst fields, wouldst thou not till them without waiting for a promise that the harvest should repay thy toil?

Aza was silent.

The husbandman knows not, continued Eber, whether the corn he sows shall be ripened by a genial season, or whether it shall be washed away by floods, or blighted by unwholesome dews. Yet he toils and watches, in the hope that his labour will be fruitful. If his toil should be frustrated, he is not therefore the less ready to submit to the will of God; but if he should be idle when others are sowing, he will surely be in poverty while others are reaping, and all men will declare the fault to be his own.

Yet, said Aza, is the end determined before the seed is cast into the ground, though the issue is hidden.

True, replied Eber : but though the issue be hidden, thus much it is given to man to know,—that unless the ground is tilled, it will not bring forth. The husbandman knows not that the harvest will surely spring from the seed ; but he knows that without seed there can be no harvest.

Havilah said, If Aza saw my child sporting on the brink of a precipice, would he not stretch forth his arm to save him ? If he beheld a serpent coiling around the boy's limbs, would he not seize the reptile and fling it away ?

Aza smiled as he answered, I have owned that I have not learned to stretch forth or to stay my hand as my faith bids ; therefore I should perhaps strive to guard thy child as if I had indeed power over his fate ; but if I obeyed my faith, I should only sit still and watch.

But it may be the will of God, said Eber, not only that the child should be saved, but that he should be saved by thy hand. It is thine therefore to stretch forth thy hand and try. If thou fail, it is the will of God ; if thou succeed, the child is saved, and thou art thankful. Thus is it also with the perils of the spirit. Though it has long been known to God whether this child shall die in the faith of Christ or of Mohammed, the issue is not known to his father or to his friends. They know, however, that if from this day he dwelt among Christians, so as never again to hear the Prophet's name, it is not to be supposed that he would call upon that name in his last hour ; and therefore, if I were to take the boy with me to my own land, and be careful that he should not henceforth see the Book, or be told of any later prophet than Jesus,—what hope could his father have that he would retain the faith of his country ?

No more, answered Havilah, than that he could be wise if he dwelt alone among the ignorant, or pure if his abode were with the vile, or earthly if he should henceforth converse with none but angels.

Now, said Aza to Havilah, tell me what is thy assurance

respecting the absolute decrees of the Creator. Was Moses wrong in blaming Adam, or was the fate of Adam determined by himself?

The fate of Adam was fixed, like the fate of every other man, replied Havilah, by Him to whom time is as nothing. To Him one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day; so that the sentence of the judgement-day was pronounced by Him in the moment that the creating word went forth. Neither these decrees, nor any others which He has made, shall be set aside for ever: they are absolute and immutable. These decrees also comprehend, not only the issues of all events, but the means by which every end is wrought.

Let not this be forgotten, said Eber; nor that He has made the connexion certain between the progress and the issues of events, between the end and the means by which that end is wrought; and that He has made known this certainty unto man. If the olive should yield its fruit in plenty, whether it were fixed in the midst of a stream, or on a barren rock, or amidst a rich soil, man would but waste his care in tending it: but because it is not so, it would be folly to expect fruit where there has been no culture. In like manner, if knowledge were given without being sought, and wisdom came like the manna of the wilderness, none knowing whence or how, men might hope to become sages by sporting or sleeping all the day. But since it is not so; since wisdom can only be gained by much toil, and thought, and self-denial; a thoughtless man can no more hope to be a sage, than one who toils after knowledge can fear to be, in the end, altogether a fool.—Thus far is the absolute decree revealed to man.

Was this made known to Adam? said Aza.

It was; for he was assured on the word of his Maker, that if he transgressed, he should surely die,—as we are assured that if we transgress, we shall suffer.

Why then, said Aza, is there this death and this suffering, if it be predetermined that man shall transgress?

Eber answered, Why there is pain and death in the world,

it has not yet pleased the Father to declare: but since his goodness is abundant, and his wisdom and power have no bounds, we cannot doubt that the reasons, when they shall be made known, will attest some hidden wisdom which man is not yet able to comprehend. All that we yet know is, that everything exists by God's absolute decree; that evil exists,—and therefore that evil exists by God's absolute decree. Why plagues and earthquakes have desolated the earth, why pain and guilt have troubled mankind, we may hope to learn hereafter; and till then we may wait patiently, since we see how beauty rises up out of the dust, how peace issues from woe, and how purity is wrought out of repentance.

Why, said Havilah, does Aza inquire respecting evil, if he believes that all things are from God?

Not for myself, said Aza smiling; for since I believe in the absolute predestination which the Prophet taught, none of these questions trouble me. I inquired, because one who holds that sin is the work either of the Despairing One, or of man himself, inquired thus of me concerning Adam and every other sinner. He inquired, as Adam did of Moses, why he should suffer for that which was pre-ordained; and whether it is not a mockery to give threats and promises when the issue is already fixed?

If such an one should inquire again, said Havilah, tell him that we will explain why there is guilt and sorrow, the consequence of guilt, when he shall declare why his gardens are not full of the fruit and waters of Paradise; why the life of man is not stretched out to a thousand years; and why all his days are not filled with gladness. Why man is not made equal to the holy among the genii, and the genii to the angels, and the angels to the archangels, we know no more than why there is evil in the world.

Tell him also, said Eber, that it is no mockery to give threats and promises from Heaven, whether or not they shall avail to the persons to whom they are first given. Every end is wrought by means; and these are some of the most impor-

tant means by which the minds of men are disposed to good and evil. The warning to Adam did not save him from his first offence, as was known to God from the beginning: but we may well believe that, having found how transgression and punishment are connected, Adam was saved from much future sin by this first warning: and we know that in every age men have looked back with awe upon this proof that God must be obeyed.

Not only, said Havilah, was the first sinner himself a warning, but the Divine command was made sure through all generations. But how did he who inquired of Aza suppose that the sin and the punishment were caused?

The punishment he declared to be threatened and inflicted by God, and the transgression to be caused by the Evil One.

If so, said Eber, from whom had the Evil One his power, and by whose permission did he use it? Was God weak that he could not control, or blind that he could not foresee?

Such was my answer, said Aza; and when he supposed that sin was created by Adam, I made the same reply, saying, If God permit aught evil which he could prevent, the evil is from him:—If he could not prevent, why call we him God?

Rather let us suppose, said Eber, that what men now call evil shall prove in the end to bring forth that which is holy and blessed. Pain is now grievous to us, and it is lawful to escape from it when an innocent way is open, though we must endure willingly that which it is not permitted to escape. Sin is the most odious of all things, and therefore we must watch against it, and flee from it with all our might. We ought to dread falling under temptation more than the dangers of a precipice, and should purify ourselves from the infection of bad examples more carefully than from that of the plague. Having sinned, we should be more anxious to repent than the sick man to be healed of his sickness. Fearful are the ways of God in the earth:—but of all the sorrows which he has ordained, none are so terrible as those which await upon guilt.

Is sin, then, to be patiently endured like sickness? asked Aza.

The sinner, like the afflicted, must humble himself before God, replied Eber; but he must not struggle the less to free himself from his sin. There are many sicknesses for which no cure is known; they can only be willingly borne; but for sin of every kind there are remedies at hand, and alas for him who seizes them not! By confession and prayer to God, by making reparation to man where we have offended, by controlling the desires of the heart, by studying and waiting upon God's will,—the sinner may become holy, and the penitent spirit may attain peace. O Havilah! teach thy child from this day how fearful is sin, and how the disobedient are wretched above all who suffer! Teach him, that though neither thou nor he can know what shall be appointed to him on the judgment-day, it is the duty of both to hope that he shall be found pure and happy. If the means are used, he shall surely become so; and look whether the means be not in thine hand.

Ought not Moses, said Aza, rather to have had compassion on Adam, than to have reproached him for his disobedience?

The rebukes which are spoken to sinners by God, replied Eber, are uttered to alarm and bring back the guilty, and to deter others from sin, even as the threatenings which are offered before the sin is committed. Thus should it be with the rebukes of man towards man. If by rebuke any one can be brought to repentance, or those who behold to fear and carefulness, it is wise and kind to offer just reproach: but to do thus to one who has already repented, or when the opportunity to sin is past, is not only useless but cruel: and because Moses is said to do this in the tradition thou hast related, I believe not the tradition. If Adam and Moses had indeed reasoned together in the presence of God, they would already have known why death came into the world by the one, and the Law was given by the hands of the other; and Moses would not have taken account of Adam as if he could have been the first cause of anything. If they had reasoned, it would

have been concerning the will of God, without charging any man with creating evil.

As for the compassion which Moses ought to have felt, said Havilah, we know not how grief and pity are felt beyond the grave; but it is certain that on earth there are none who so much need it as the guilty. If the diseases of the spirit be more fearful than those of the body; if sin be a heavier woe than the loss of friends, or of health, or of riches, as Eber has justly declared,—then for whom should our tears be shed, to whom should our help be given so earnestly as to the guilty? Little indeed do they know of the ways of God who hate or injure the sinner!

Little indeed! replied Eber, for God loves all, and has pity on all. It is for man to fear and detest sin, to fly from it, and to guard from its infection all whom he can protect. But it is less cruel to suffer a man to be swept away by a flood when our hand could save him, than to leave a sinner unwarned. It is more merciful to reproach the blind and to mock the lame, than to point at the sinner with bitter scorn, and to laugh at his shame when we should rather weep for his woe.

This have I never done, said Aza; nor have I at any time intermeddled with any, be they holy or be they guilty. The will of God shall be done upon every man, and I wait to behold what it is, knowing that nought which I can do shall change it.

The will of God is wrought on man by the hands of man, said Eber, and therefore can no man be justified in refusing to act where God has opened the way. If Mohammed had remained retired in the cave to watch what God should do in the earth, what would have been the faith of the multitudes whom ye call the Faithful at this day? If Havilah were henceforth to take no more care of his child, waiting to see the will of God concerning him, how could the mind of the child be unfolded, or his spirit made devout? What then would be the lot of the boy?

It would be that of an orphan, answered Havilah, for Eber would take him to his bosom and be to him as to one who had no father. Then would my boy become a Christian.—But these things shall not be, if, as I trust, it is the will of God that he should be among the Faithful, and shall dwell by my side till one of us shall die.

Thou knowest not, said Aza, but that thou mayst be called away to the war; or that the boy shall die; or that utter poverty may overtake him and thee, so that thou canst not give him bread; or that his heart shall be unbelieving as that of Nathan the Jew, or corrupt as that of Sachem the Cruel.

It is true, said Havilah, that I know not what the providence of God may design for my child and myself: but since there is hope of growing purity and peace for both, I will strive to obtain these blessings for my son. I will, while the means are in my hand, open his mind with knowledge and his heart with love: I will teach him to adore God with his spirit, and to serve men with his hands. If God send his blessing on my labours, I shall go to my grave in peace; or if my child should go down thither before me, I shall yet rejoice that he has lived, and have hope that he shall bless me hereafter.

But, said Aza, if it is written that he should become an unbeliever and a reprobate?

I have said, answered Eber, that some part of the Divine decrees are made known to man,—that part in which it is fixed that the end shall not fail where all the means to the end are used. By this knowledge does the child of whom we speak look for flowers when he has planted the seed and watered the ground, and striven to preserve the stem from being withered by scorching heats, and the leaves from being blighted by unwholesome dews. It may be that some rude hand shall snap the stalk or destroy the opening buds, or that a hidden worm is feeding on the root: but if these dangers are avoided, the flower shall surely blossom to his wish. Thus surely shall many virtues adorn the mind of the child to the

parent's wish, if his young days are tended by watchful and enlightened care, so that no evil is permitted to lay waste the fair promise he puts forth.

If I thought like Aza, said Havilah, I should be like the ostrich of the desert, who leaves her eggs in the sand, unguarded by her care, and uncherished by the warmth of her breast. Whether her young have perished, she returns not to see: if she meets them abroad, she knows them not for her own, and they pass her by as a stranger, and leave her alone. Wiser is the stork, who shelters his young in the high cedar. When the tree is bowed before the storm, he spreads his wings over the nest: he takes his young abroad in the morning sunshine, and leads them home when the thunder is in the sky. When he is old, his children forsake him not. They gather food for him, and bear him on their wings, and guard him as he guarded them in the days of his strength. Though God cares for all, though he supplies warmth to the young ostrich from the sun, as to the stork from the breast of his parent, the lot of the parents is not equal:—the one stretches herself out on the burning sand to die alone; the other hears the fluttering of wings about him while death is closing his eyes.

Would the last hour of Nathan have been as peaceful as it was, said Eber, if he had not laboured to do the will of God, as well as believed that it would be done? He knew that the original decrees of God could not be reversed or changed; that if his children were appointed to forsake the God of their fathers, no man could save them; and that if the destitute were ordained to perish, no man could preserve them. Yet he brought up his children carefully, and fed the poor; so that through him it has been proved that the will of God was merciful to them.

Havilah answered, God works everywhere, and none stays his hand. He orders all things that are done in heaven and on earth: but he orders many things through the purposes of man, and works many things by the hand of man.

Alas for him, said Eber, who fulfills the designs of God against his own impure will! Happy is he whose purposes are godlike, and whose holy deeds show whence proceeds the power of his will!

IX.—*Of the Fruits of the Faith.*

EBER went often to the house where the family of Nathan dwelt. Their riches were gone, and they were oppressed by some to whom their father had owed somewhat which they were no longer able to pay. Some despised them because they were Jews; and others, who would have assisted them if they had known their need, forgot them, because no complaints were heard from the sufferers. Eber opened to them his purse as freely as his heart, but they would receive nothing from him till he had promised that he would not seek aid for them from any who scorned their faith,—not even from Havilah. Therefore Eber kept silence with his friend concerning this household, while he rebuked their oppressors and comforted the oppressed, and gave to them all that he had to give.

One day as he approached their dwelling he saw Havilah coming forth. When they met, Havilah blamed him that he had not made known to him what he had done for this family, that he also might have helped them.—Eber told Havilah how he had been forbidden to seek aid of any who despised the faith of Nathan.

Havilah replied, Though the Prophet declares that unbelief is to be scorned, who hath ever bidden to despise the sorrowful? Doth not every religion rather teach, that to pity the afflicted and help the poor is blessed? Nathan the Jew fed the poor who were Faithful: Eber the Christian supports the Infidels who are oppressed: and, for myself, my heart is open to the sorrows of every man whom my hand can aid.

Then art thou my brother, said Eber, and the brother of these mourners whom thou hast come to comfort. O that it

were thus everywhere ! If the guardian angels were to go up from the four winds, all bearing prayers to God and records of good deeds to men, it would be written down that there is one faith in all the earth, though to that faith there are many names.

The Prophet taught, said Havilah, that the end of faith is virtue, and that the greatest virtues are prayer and the giving of alms.

Christ also taught, replied Eber, that the end of faith is holiness, and that holiness is testified by devotion to God and love to man. Herein, my friend, are we of one mind, and let us henceforth act as if we were of one soul.

Havilah answered, In our good deeds to men we may join hands as brethren, but we must pray apart.

It is true, replied Eber, that there are prayers too sacred to be uttered in the hearing of man. There are also some which we could not offer with one accord, because our faith in the prophets is different : but since we adore the same God, and acknowledge the same eternal truth, and love mankind with the same earnest love,—why may we not pray together that the truth may prevail, and that man may be blessed ?

Havilah replied, Though the devotion of the spirit is the life of prayer, so that without it no outward rites can avail ; yet those outward rites are also commanded, and the Faithful can pray with none who use them not. Mohammed commanded that men should purify themselves with water before prayer, and that the body should express reverence as well as the thoughts. The Christians are but once purified,—when they are baptized ; and many are not even thus made pure. Thenceforward they wash without thought of prayer, and pray without the preparation of washing. Neither do they prostrate themselves ; and some there are who are seldom seen to bend the knee.

This is true, answered Eber : but think not therefore that the Christians esteem prayer less holy, or practise it less solemnly than the followers of Mohammed. Thy Prophet

spoke wisely when he said, that “prayer is the pillar of religion,” and that “no religion is good which is without prayer:” for how should man truly love Him whom he seeks not, or be strong in faith if he finds not the highest strength? The Prophet also said truly, that “prayer is the key of Paradise;” for if there be one hour rather than another when the peace of heaven succeeds to the troubles of earth,—when the glories of eternity may be discerned amidst the shadows of time,—it is when man draws near to his Maker. This communion, if pure, cannot be made more pure by the preparation of the body; if impure, it can by no such means be sanctified.

Was it not commanded to the Hebrews to purify themselves before prayer?

It was: but the Jews did not know God so fully as it is given to men now to know him; and it was necessary for them to learn how to cleanse the soul, by first cleansing the body, and to adore God in some measure as an earthly sovereign, before they could understand how spiritual is his glory. When Christ came, the ancient forms were done away: he taught that meat may be eaten with unwashed hands if the heart be clean, and that the Father could no longer be worshiped more acceptably in the temple or on the sacred mountain than in the chamber or the field. Jesus himself prayed without regarding forms like these. He prayed when he stood beside the sepulchre of Lazarus, and when he stretched forth his hand to heal the sick, and when he broke bread, and when he went forth alone among the hills, and when he wandered on the sea-shore. He prayed in spirit and in truth;—and thus do his true followers also pray.

It is told in our traditions, and also in the gospel of Barnabas, said Havilah, that Abraham was taught by Gabriel himself to use such purifications as the Faithful use at this day. How then may we neglect that which was so taught?

If it had been so taught, replied Eber, is it not time that it should pass away, when other ceremonies of the Hebrews are abolished? From the Jews Mohammed learned all that he

has commanded concerning purifications, and the times and manner of prayer: these things, therefore, like all else that is Jewish, should be of less esteem than the teachings of Christ.

Havilah answered, If Mohammed spoke truly of the importance of prayer, was he not also right when he said, that "the practice of religion was founded on cleanliness"? and that "cleanliness is one half of the faith, and the key of prayer"?

It is said among the Christians, replied Eber, that one who is holy in spirit will be also pure in body: but I see not that the duty of cleanliness, great as it is, has more connexion with prayer than with almsgiving or any other righteous deed. I see, on the other hand, that by commanding that they should be thus connected, your Prophet has caused much superstition;—and by what is prayer made so impure as by superstition? When the company with whom I journeyed in the plain stopped to pray where there was no water, they made a pretence of washing themselves with the dust of the ground.

If our Prophet has learned much from the Jews, said Havilah, this practice were his followers taught by the Christians. In the baptism of Christians, fine sand has been used instead of water.

The practice is not therefore the less superstitious, replied Eber. Had it been done in the presence of Jesus, he would have rebuked his followers as he rebuked those who thought more of washing the hands than of cleansing the spirit.

Mohammed was more holy than Jesus, said Havilah, because he gave more strict commands concerning prayer. Five times every day must the Faithful worship.

Jesus commanded not the times of prayer, replied Eber, because he desired that the spirit should be composed, and the thoughts withdrawn from the things of the world when man draws near to God. Thus can it be with no one at five set times every day. He saw how the proud ones of the Jews were exact in the times of prayer, kneeling in the streets and speaking to

God while they were desiring the praise of men. Because Jesus, being holy, knew what was the holiness of prayer, he desired that the words of the lips should not go before the desires of the spirit; and he therefore left every man free to choose in what form he should testify his devotion, and at what times he should humble himself before God. His followers should, like him, pray often, and be continually with God in spirit while they converse with men. When I hear men cry aloud on the name of God, it is my hope that his blessing may follow their prayers; but I esteem that homage yet more blessed which is offered in the stillness of the spirit, when the lips move not and no man knows what is done.

Yet the Christians meet publicly for prayer.

They do; and they find the rite blessed to them. But when they thus meet, it is that they may withdraw themselves from the world, and worship with one heart and one voice. Thus did the Apostles, and thus may it long be done by those who would be apostles in spirit! But by this practice all pray together, and not every man singly in the sight of many. They withdraw from the sights and sounds of the world, so that the thoughts of their merchandise, or their husbandry, or their household occupations may be put far away. Where this is done truly, this social worship is holy.

Is there not, asked Haviilah, a day of assembly among the Christians as among the Faithful?

There is; but not the same day. The disciples of Jesus met together to worship on the first day of the week, because on that day their Lord was raised from the dead. The Christians have set apart the Lord's day for worship ever since. The followers of Mohammed have set apart the fifth day of the week, as their Prophet commanded.—In differences like these there is no evil, since no command of God is broken. If a day be kept holy, it matters not whether it be the first or the fifth. Therefore I make sacred the one in my own land, and the other in thine, rejoicing that I am in a country where any day is thus often hallowed.

If Eber rejoices in this holy season, why does he not observe others? To him all months are alike, and he observes no fasts.

Eber replied, I have not learned from the Scriptures, nor from traditions, nor by any other means, that one month is more sacred than another; and as for fasting,—does my friend speak of abstaining from food only, or of other kinds of self-restraint?

Havilah answered, The wise among us say that there are three kinds of fasting:—the mortifying the appetites of the body; the restraining the eyes and the ears and every other member from sin; and the refraining the thoughts from worldly desires and devoting them to God*.

These things, replied Eber, do I desire to fulfill, not at holy seasons only, but every day. I pass no day without food, because by so doing my body would be weakened without the spirit being purified; but at all times would I be temperate, and able to deny myself: and as for the last two kinds of fasting, which the wise among you declare,—may I practise them more and more continually!

What said Christ to his followers concerning abstaining from food? asked Havilah, and what was their practice?

The Scriptures tell, replied Eber, that the disciples of John the Baptist fasted, while those of Christ fasted not; and that when Jesus was questioned concerning this, he answered that his disciples fasted not while he remained with them. That some of them fasted afterwards, we know from other parts of the history; and also that Jesus did not forbid the practice; only desiring those who used it to make no vain display of their self-denial. Yet, as he nowhere gave command that any one should fast, and as other Jewish customs were then used by Christians, which are abolished at this day, many among the Christians believe, as I do, that it is no part of religion to restrain the body from the food which it requires. Neither do

* Prelim. Dissert. page 112.

we believe, like the followers of Moses and those of Mohammed, that any kind of food or drink is more holy than another. That it was rightly declared to be so by Moses we know ; but since Christ gave perfect freedom in the outward forms of religion, we refuse the commands of Mohammed to refrain from drinking the wine of which Jesus himself drank, or to refuse the wholesome meats which God has given to nourish the body. Yet while we feel ourselves thus far free, we know that excess in food is sin, and that drunkenness is to be abhorred.

Havilah replied, Not only did Mohammed command men to be temperate, by abstaining from certain meats and drinks, but he declared that "fasting is the gate of heaven."

Eber replied, It is however certain that it is more easy to make men temperate by putting into them the spirit of temperance, than by commanding them what they shall eat and what they shall drink. A true Christian, to whom all times are holy, and whose desires are fixed on higher things than any which can only gratify the body, is more pure in his life than many who outwardly fast often, but whose inward desires are not controlled. Such men as he are holy, while they make no vain pretence of holiness: they are the husbands of one wife; they refresh themselves moderately with food, and wine, and sleep. Because they are inwardly pure, they are outwardly pure also, having laws of purification from their own consciences. Their moderation is not painful, because their desires are fixed on nothing which they may not innocently enjoy: they find their pleasures in loving God and in blessing mankind, and all other pleasure is as nothing compared with this. Thus does the spirit of religion make pure; and in making pure, thus does it make happy also.

Truly, said Havilah, in giving of alms is there more pleasure than in feasting.

The two highest duties of man yield also his purest pleasures, said Eber; and because Christ thus felt and taught, we know that he was sent by God. Prayer was to him in the

dark night more refreshing than sleep on a silken couch; and to bless men he loved, better than shade at noon-day, or food when he hungered, or rest when he was weary. When I see men eating and drinking to excess, or too earnestly desiring pleasures which yet their consciences forbid, I feel that they know not the joys of religion any more than its spirit. But when I behold one who loves all that the hand of God has made, who has compassion on sinners, and gives help to all who need, who has purity on his lips, and peace in his countenance,—I know that such an one is beloved of God as a true believer, and that he is blessed as the faithful alone can be blessed. There is joy in his prayers, and in his alms-deeds; and peace is about him, whether he kneels in his chamber or meditates in the fields, or is seen among men, where blessings follow him from a hundred tongues.

X.—*Of the Spirit of the Faith.*

THE day was breaking, when the household of Havilah rose to see a troop of soldiers go forth from the city to war. Among this troop were fathers, or brothers, or friends of all who looked on, and there was much greeting between the soldiers (of whom each one stood beside his war-horse,) and the people who went to and fro in the dim light. The words which were spoken from friend to friend were uttered softly, for the parting was near, and there might be no future meeting; yet the whispers were not lost, though there was a trampling of many feet, and the fiery horses pawed the ground, and the voices of the leaders were upraised above those of the people. The musical instruments also sounded through the city and into the fields beyond, so that the flocks and they who guarded them were roused, and turned to listen, and the night-birds flew to their holes in the caverns. When the signal was given for prayer, there was a deep stillness in all the assembly, so that the cool breeze which brought the fragrance of spices,

brought also the murmur of waters from without the city walls. When the music sounded again, and every soldier sprang upon his horse to go forth in the name of God and of the Prophet, the child of Havilah clapped his hands and uttered a cry of joy ; while Aza folded his arms on his bosom, and looked on calmly, as on the day when his sons went forth to return no more.

Let us also follow, said the child, as he saw the people moving forward to the gate by which the troop was to leave the city.—Havilah took the child by the hand, and they went out of the city to a spot where they might see how the road wound far away among the hills. There they beheld how the soldiers, when they had advanced some way, looked back once more upon the multitude who thronged the gate, shouted once again the name of the Prophet, and spurring their horses, fled away as if the winds had borne them along. The mists of the valley were lifted up before them, so that the gazers could trace them on their way, till the whole troop appeared as the shadow of a cloud on the distant pathway.

The blessing of God, and the aid of the Prophet be with them ! cried Havilah, when he could see them no more.

On the conquerors who shall live, and on the martyrs who shall fall ! added Aza.

Father, said the child, when shall I go forth to conquer in the name of Mohammed, or to gain the reward of a martyr ?

When thou shalt have given tokens of wisdom and valour, my child. Till then, the sword which our wise men call “the key of heaven and hell” must not be put into thy young hands, lest thou shouldst through idleness suffer it to rust, or through cowardice fling it away.

Aza will promise for me, said the boy, that the sword shall be more precious to me than all the riches of my father’s house, and that I shall ever hasten to the battle rather than to the feast.

Aza replied, If I yet live a few years, I indeed hope to send forth this boy as if he were the son of my sons, and to

welcome him back as a conqueror, or to glory in him as a martyr.

Why, inquired Eber, is the sword called the key of heaven and hell? and why is the name of martyr given to those who perish in war?

Havilah answered, The Book says, "Verily, if God pleased, he could take vengeance on the unbelievers; but he commandeth you to fight his battles, that he may prove the one of you by the other. And as to those who fight in defence of God's true religion, God will not suffer their works to perish: he will guide them, and will dispose their hearts aright; and he will lead them into Paradise, of which he hath told them*." Again, "Thou shalt in no wise reckon those dead who have been slain in the cause of God: nay, they are sustained alive with their Lord, rejoicing for what God of his favour hath granted them†." By the Book itself, therefore, are they who are slain for the faith called martyrs; and because by the sword they win favour or disgrace from above, is the sword called the key of heaven and hell.

And does Havilah believe it to be so?

I know, said Havilah, that the various people to whom the truth of God has at any time been delivered, have fought for that faith, and that the slain have been accounted blessed. The Jews of old unsheathed the sword at the command of God himself, and in his name drove out all the idolatrous nations from the land of promise. Did they not say one to another, "Cursed be he who keepeth back his sword from blood"; and again, "Because he hath fought the battles of the Lord, he is blessed from the Lord"? The Christians also exhorted one another to bravery and to perseverance in the wars which they called sacred. Their leaders declared that the kingdom of heaven was open to the soldiers of the Cross; and I have been told that the most exalted priests of their church promised that such as died for the defence of their

* Koran, chap. 47.

† Ibid. chap. 3.

faith and the rescue of the sepulchre of Christ should obtain of God a celestial reward.—The reward of the Faithful shall surely be no less great, if their Prophet and his religion be holier.

Eber replied, There have indeed been multitudes of Christians who fought for the Gospel, not doubting that they should be rewarded for so doing. But such knew not the spirit of the Gospel, nor discerned that it forbids violence, and accounts it a crime to defend the truth of God by the angry passions of men. To me it has ever been strange, that the Christians who carried war to the mouth of the sepulchre for which they fought, should have known so little of Jesus and of his followers, as to have testified to their belief in the manner they did. If the Scriptures had not then been a sealed book to them, they would have been wiser.

How does Eber read therein, said Havilah, that he speaks with such certainty of the mistakes of his brethren in the faith?

The Christians of whom I speak, answered Eber, are not those of the present time, when each one may read the Scriptures for himself. I speak of those in past ages, who received the Gospel only from the lips of their priests, and who were therefore subject to do whatever the ambition of such men might command, whether it was to build splendid temples to God, or palaces for the priests, or to spend their riches for the glory of the church, or their blood for the defence of their superstitions. The truth of God can never be aided by deeds like these. It cannot be made more safe by the defence of armour, or more triumphant by the sword, or more glorious by the sacrifice of a million of lives. This is perceived by all who understand the Gospel for themselves, and therefore is there now no war for the Christian faith.

Tell me, said Havilah, wherein the Scriptures of the Christians are so unlike the Scriptures of Mohammed as to forbid bravery in defending the faith.

Eber smiled as he answered, Bravery is nowhere forbidden

in our law; and to defend the truth with a courage which cannot be subdued is accounted a great virtue: but this courage is of a different and a higher kind than that which is shown in the field. There may be bravery without violence, and fortitude without pride. Such bravery and such fortitude were those of Christ and of his Apostles. The religion of Jesus was a religion of peace: but none could embrace this faith in its early days whose spirits were not calm to face danger, and strong to endure pain and death.

I know, replied Havilah, that the Jews were disappointed because Christ came not as a warlike prince. Mohammed marvelled that they did not therefore receive him, who was a warlike prince.

Mohammed was indeed, said Eber, as unlike Jesus as their Scriptures are unlike in letter and in spirit. But I will declare, as my friend desires, what I find in the Gospel respecting the spirit of peace and of war. When Jesus appeared, the Jews were impatient for war against the conquerors of their nation, whom they hated: and if Jesus had spoken the word, they would have made him a king, and have followed him, full of faith, to the field. When he went forth to preach to them on the mountain where armies had often been gathered together, they followed him, eager to make a camp about him, and send a defiance to their enemies: but Jesus spoke of peace with strangers as well as with countrymen, and of love to enemies as well as friends. He gave blessings to the meek and to the peace-makers, and taught to seek after holiness rather than glory. Thou hast read for thyself what followed. The pure who sought God, the gentle who loved, the sorrowful who mourned, the penitent who feared, came to Jesus: the proud and the cruel, who thirsted for glory and for war, forsook him, and thenceforth persecuted him to death.

It is strange, said Aza, that his Gospel has endured to this day, if such despised persons alone were his followers.

Others soon joined them, said Eber, who saw his miracles,

and devoted themselves to share his labours: yet these, though they lived with him, and saw how holy and how peaceful he was, still hoped that the time would come when he would take the sword, or put it into their hands. They watched in vain. When he sent forth seventy of his followers to preach his Gospel with miracles, he commanded them to go unarmed, to trust in God for their safety, to meet peril and pain wherever they should await them; but to offer no violence, and to return no injuries. Going forth thus peacefully, they returned with joy, safe, though unarmed. Not even yet were his followers convinced. When Jesus was about to be seized in the garden by those who carried him away to his death, Peter drew his sword, and wounded a servant of the High Priest: then Jesus reprovéd him, and bade him put away his sword, declaring that they who use the sword shall perish by the sword, and reminding him that it was not through want of power from on high that his enemies were not destroyed before his face. He also healed the wound, as a sign that he loved peace and forgave injuries.

Our Prophet also commanded to be merciful, said Havilah, and declared that there should be no violence in religion.

The mercy which Mohammed commanded, said Eber, was to do no injury to those who submitted or who could not defend themselves. This is well. But Jesus commanded that there should be no strife; so that none could triumph over another, or injure another. This is better. As for the saying of Mohammed that "there should be no violence in religion*," it was spoken not of war, but of the desire of some of his followers to oblige their sons to take on them the profession of your faith. That the violence of war was allowed by him, there is witness in the battles which he fought, and in the commands which he gave to shed blood. When I read and hear of the slaughter which has been done in the name of your Prophet, and see that the spoils of war are divided among

* Koran, chap. 2.

the conquerors, and remember how multitudes have been made slaves, or compelled to profess a religion which they abhorred, I have blessed the name of Jesus, and prayed that all might see in him the greatest of the prophets of God. By him was the blood of no man shed, and to none did he give permission to hurt a hair of the head. He gave pity and not vengeance to his enemies, and prayed for them when he might have destroyed them. He despoiled none of their possessions; but refused the wealth which his nation would have laid at his feet, if he had declared himself a prince. He frowned upon slavery, since he came to give that freedom of the spirit under which the body cannot long remain in bondage. Wherever men at this day believe with the heart as Jesus taught, that all men are equal in the sight of God, there is no slavery. And in the day when the Gospel shall be rightly believed in over all the world, men will ask one another how any had ever dared to take to himself the name of Master, and why any man should have submitted himself to be a slave. But these days are not yet.

Aza said, How was it that the religion of Jesus was received by any, if he was thus meek? Why did not men, as they are wont, despise his gentleness, and ridicule his poverty?

Instead of contempt, replied Eber, there was awe; and instead of ridicule, there was reverence. Men saw his mighty works, and trembled while they loved:—they beheld how he was clothed with holiness, and bowed before him: they saw how, being poor, he made many rich and blessed them. Thus was it also towards his followers; for though they were peaceful, they were mighty, and in their meekness they were strong. They had power from above to subdue many hearts, and were armed with faith and patience as with a seven-fold shield. None could esteem those weak, who made rulers tremble on the judgement-seat, and struck fear into the hearts of soldiers. None could doubt the courage of those who calmly met the perils of land and sea, persecution from the people, torture from the rulers, and death at the command of

princes. These princes and rulers sat within their palaces, and ignorantly laughed at the weakness of those whom they had commanded to be destroyed; but they who beheld the destruction feared vengeance from Heaven, and saw how far the strength of the soul excels that of the limbs, and that patience is more noble than revenge.

Havilah said, I have sometimes questioned within myself when wars for the faith should cease. It cannot be that they shall continue for ever: yet if a time of universal peace and holiness should come, men will marvel that the Book tells of slaughter, and of spoils, and of slavery. How also shall men cease to hate one another and to seek vengeance and profit for themselves, if they read that Mohammed himself sought revenge, and gratified himself with many pleasures which others may not desire?

These questions are wise, replied Eber; and my reply is, that in the days of peace and purity which shall at length arrive, the religion of Christ shall be more esteemed than that of Mohammed. Men shall then be more wise than to be satisfied with the pleasures which Mohammed allowed, and in which he indulged. They will find all that is pure in his religion made more pure in the Gospel; and all that is true in the one, set forth more clearly in the other. Many may rejoice that through the Book they learned the name of Christ; but they will cast aside the Book when they have found in the Gospel a better record of the faith. They shall then discern that though Mohammed was wise, and though he was permitted by God to display the eternal truth to some who would otherwise have worshiped many gods, he was not among the appointed prophets; and that it is impious to call him greater than Jesus, the last and holiest of the messengers of God.

Yet behold, said Aza, how the faith he taught has spread from land to land. Wherever the sword has been carried in the name of the Prophet, that name has been received.

In the wisdom of God has it been so ordered, replied Eber,

because the faith of Mohammèd is better than that of idolaters; and while it overthrows idols, it prepares a way for the faith of Christ. This is, I doubt not, the purpose for which it has been ordained to spread so far: but the work of God is not finished till the name of Christ is exalted beyond every other earthly name.

The time once was, when from yonder gate idolatrous priests came forth from the city, with the name of a false god upon their lips and a blind cruelty in their hearts. Then the cries of mothers, whose children were about to be sacrificed, mingled with the music of the worship; and the little ones, who knew not what should befall them, wrung the hearts of those, who bore them, with their smiles.

Then, cried Havilah, was there mourning among the angels who beheld: then they wept for the guilt and the sorrows of men.

To-day, continued Eber, we have seen a troop go forth thence to war for the faith they held. They cried on the name of the true God: but they went forth to destroy the works of his hand; to shed the blood which he warmed with life; to seize upon wealth which is not theirs, and to spread anguish and fear among those who have done them no injury. A time shall come when the will of the Father of men shall be better understood.

What shall then be done?

Then, said Eber, shall that gate stand wide for men to go to and fro, as if they were indeed the guardian angels one of another. Instead of the warlike trumpet, there shall be the holier music of praise to God, and joy among men. The ways where the war-horses have this day left their track shall be trodden by the feet of those who go forth, not thirsting for the blood of men, but rather for the glory of God; not praying for vengeance, but rather for mercy on their enemies. Instead of fear, they shall cause hope to spring up around them wherever they turn: instead of inflicting anguish, they shall offer peace; and shall give liberty to the soul, instead

of bondage to the limbs. Where they are present, tears shall be dried up, groans shall be hushed, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Nay, said Aza, then would yonder gate be the entrance of Paradise; for what greater good has Paradise than that which thou hast said?

Havilah answered, There remains over all in Paradise "the superabundant recompense" of which Mohammed spoke, and for which Eber hopes as well as I.

For the joy which cannot be conceived, said Eber, I wait till it shall be revealed in the presence of God. But it is my belief, that all the peace which the spirit of man can now imagine or desire might be possessed on earth, if the religion of Christ everywhere prevailed in the heart and sanctified the life.

THE END.

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